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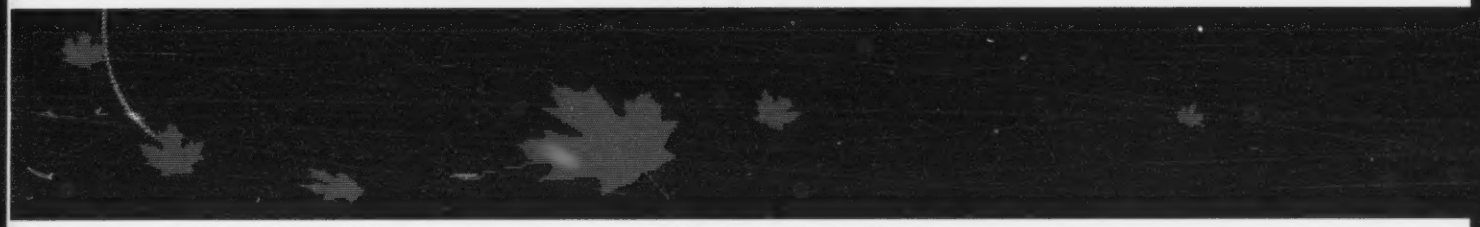
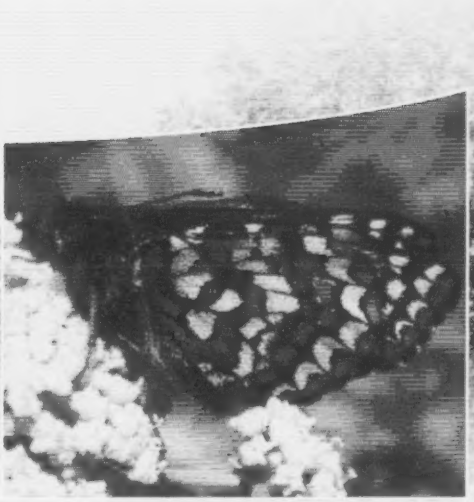


Species at Risk Act

Annual Report

for 2009



Canada

Print version
ISBN: 978-1-100-52405-4
Cat. No.: En1-45/2009

PDF version
ISBN: 978-1-100-16890-6
Cat. No.: En1-45/2009E-PDF

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Species at Risk Act

Annual Report

for 2009

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1 INTRODUCTION

1.1 The Purpose of the Annual Report

The *Species at Risk Act* (SARA) received Royal Assent on December 12, 2002, and came fully into force on June 1, 2004.

This report provides a summary of SARA-related activities carried out in 2009. The report fulfils the Minister of the Environment's obligation, under section 126 of the Act, to prepare an annual report on the administration of SARA for each calendar year. The Act requires that the report include a summary addressing the following matters:

a) the assessments of the Committee on the Status of Endangered Wildlife in Canada (COSEWIC) and the Minister's response to each of them;

b) the preparation and implementation of recovery strategies, action plans and management plans;

c) all agreements made under sections 10 to 13;

d) all agreements entered into and permits issued under section 73, and all agreements and permits amended under section 75 or exempted under section 76;

e) enforcement and compliance actions taken, including the response to any requests for investigation;

f) regulations and emergency orders made under SARA; and

g) any other matters that the Minister considers relevant.

This introductory section provides background information on SARA and outlines the responsibilities of the federal departments and agencies under the Act. Subsequent sections describe the following activities under SARA:

- wildlife assessment and listing under SARA;
- protection measures for listed species;
- recovery planning for listed species;
- recovery implementation;
- monitoring and evaluation;
- consultation and governance; and
- the Species at Risk Public Registry.

1.2 Background on SARA

1.2.1 The Government's Strategy for Species at Risk

SARA is the legislative basis for the Government of Canada's strategy for the protection of wildlife species at risk. It supports the federal commitments under the 1996 Accord for the Protection of Species at Risk. The Habitat Stewardship Program for Species at Risk also supports these commitments, by providing a mechanism to encourage action by all Canadians in the recovery of species at risk (see section 5.2.2.1). Species at risk conservation is shared by all jurisdictions in Canada and is a process based on assessment, protection, recovery planning, implementation, and monitoring and evaluation, as illustrated in the diagram below. The Act recognizes this joint responsibility and that all Canadians have a role to play in the protection of wildlife.

1.2.2 The Purpose of SARA

SARA is an important tool for conserving and protecting Canada's biological diversity. The purposes of the Act are to prevent wildlife species from being extirpated or becoming extinct, to provide for the recovery of wildlife species that are extirpated, endangered or threatened as a result of human activity, and to manage species of special concern to prevent them from becoming endangered or threatened.

The Act establishes a process for conducting scientific assessments of the population status of individual species and a mechanism for listing extirpated, endangered, threatened and special-concern species. SARA also includes provisions

for the protection, recovery and management of individuals of listed wildlife species and their critical habitats[1] and residences.[2]

SARA complements existing legislation and supports domestic implementation of certain international conventions, including:

- the *Canadian Environmental Assessment Act*;
- the *Canada Wildlife Act*;
- the *Migratory Birds Convention Act, 1994*;
- the *Wild Animal and Plant Protection and Regulation of International and Interprovincial Trade Act*;
- the *Fisheries Act*;
- the *Oceans Act*;
- the *Canada National Parks Act*;
- the *Canada National Marine Conservation Areas Act*;
- the *Saguenay–St. Lawrence Marine Park Act*;
- the *Convention on International Trade in Endangered Species of Wild Fauna and Flora*; and
- the Convention on Biological Diversity.

1.3 Responsible Authorities for Implementation of SARA

Three government organizations, commonly referred to as competent departments, share responsibility for the implementation of SARA:

- The Parks Canada Agency oversees matters concerning individuals of species found in or on federal lands it administers.
- Fisheries and Oceans Canada oversees matters concerning aquatic species when individuals of these species are found outside Parks Canada Agency waters.
- Environment Canada oversees matters concerning all other species, including migratory birds, and is responsible for the administration of the Act.

The ministers responsible for these organizations are known as "competent ministers" under SARA. The Minister of the Environment is the minister responsible for both Environment Canada and the Parks Canada Agency.

Competent ministers have the authority to make many of the decisions in their respective areas of responsibility, including ministerial protection orders and some of the recommendations for orders that are made to the Governor in Council.

The Minister of the Environment is the minister responsible for the administration of SARA, including the List of Wildlife Species at Risk. The Minister of the Environment is required to consult with the other competent ministers as necessary on matters related to SARA administration. Orders in Council to list species under SARA are made by the Governor in Council on the recommendation of the Minister of the Environment.

2 WILDLIFE ASSESSMENT AND LISTING UNDER SARA

SARA establishes a process for conducting scientific assessments of the status of individual species. The Act separates the scientific assessment process from the listing decision, ensuring that scientists can provide fully independent assessments and that decisions affecting Canadians are made by elected officials who are accountable for those decisions.

2.1 COSEWIC Assessments

The Committee on the Status of Endangered Wildlife in Canada (COSEWIC) is the committee of experts that identifies and assesses wildlife species at risk in Canada. COSEWIC assesses the status of a wildlife species using the best available information on the biological status of a species, including scientific knowledge, community knowledge and Aboriginal Traditional Knowledge. COSEWIC provides assessments and supporting evidence annually to the Minister of the Environment. It can assess wildlife species as extinct, extirpated, endangered, threatened, of special concern, data deficient or not at risk. An extirpated wildlife species no longer exists in the wild in Canada but exists elsewhere in the world. An endangered wildlife species faces imminent extirpation or extinction. A threatened wildlife species is likely to become endangered if nothing is done to reverse the factors leading to its extirpation or extinction. A wildlife species of special concern may become threatened or endangered because of a combination of biological

[1] Under SARA "critical habitat" is defined as the habitat that is necessary for the survival or recovery of a listed wildlife species (see section 4.2).

[2] "Residence" means a dwelling-place, such as a den, nest or other similar area or place that is occupied or habitually occupied by one or more individuals during all or part of their life cycles, including breeding, rearing, staging, wintering, feeding or hibernating.

characteristics and identified threats. Further details on risk categories and more information on COSEWIC are available at www.cosewic.gc.ca.

COSEWIC includes members from government, academia, Aboriginal organizations, non-governmental organizations and the private sector. Federal government support of COSEWIC and its assessments is provided by Environment Canada, Fisheries and Oceans Canada, and the Parks Canada Agency.

To help prioritize species for detailed status assessments, COSEWIC uses the general status ranks outlined in the report *Wild Species: The General Status of Species in Canada*. This report, produced every five years, is a joint federal–provincial–territorial initiative led by Environment Canada. The second report in the Wild Species series (2005) presents general status assessments for a total of 7732 species from all provinces, territories and ocean regions, representing all of Canada's vertebrate species (fish, amphibians, reptiles, birds and mammals), all of Canada's vascular plants, and four invertebrate groups (freshwater mussels, crayfishes, odonates and tiger beetles). The Wild Species reports have greatly increased the number and variety of species assessed nationally, but with the total number of species in Canada estimated at more than 70 000, there are still many species left to be assessed. The Wild Species reports can be found at www.wildspecies.ca/rpts.cfm?lang=e.

Environment Canada and Fisheries and Oceans Canada provide input to the assessment process via their representation on COSEWIC and conduct population surveys on some species of interest to COSEWIC. In keeping with section 20 of SARA, Environment Canada provides COSEWIC with professional, technical, secretarial, clerical and other assistance that is necessary to carry out its functions via the COSEWIC Secretariat, which is housed within Environment Canada. Environment Canada scientists are regularly involved in the peer review of COSEWIC status reports.

Fisheries and Oceans Canada leads a peer-review process for aquatic species status reports and sends the results of the peer review to COSEWIC. This peer-review process involves government scientists and experts from universities and industry. In 2009, Fisheries and Oceans Canada conducted pre-COSEWIC scientific meetings on five aquatic

A threatened species's best friend: Using sniffer dogs to detect the Eastern Ribbonsnake in Kejimkujik National Park

Recently, sniffer dogs known as conservation dogs have been used in North America to locate different species of reptiles, birds and mammals. In 2009, Parks Canada and Dalhousie University joined forces to create the first conservation canine team in Atlantic Canada. The first target species was the threatened Eastern Ribbonsnake in Kejimkujik National Park, Nova Scotia. This project presented unique challenges given that few snake species have been tracked by dogs in the field and that the ribbonsnake is a semi-aquatic species that spends a considerable amount of time in stagnant water—a known obstacle for tracking dogs. Four dogs were selected for the program, and after five months of training, two were ready for fieldwork.

© Brennan Caverhill, Parks Canada Agency

To determine whether dogs increased sighting and/or capture efficiency, sighting and capture success were compared between teams with and without dogs. Teams with dogs did very well in the summer, contributing more to sightings and captures than teams without dogs. The results from the fall survey, however, were less convincing: dog teams still yielded more sightings but not captures, and overall, human teams found a greater number of snakes. A number of factors may have influenced these results. For example, lower temperatures in the fall may have limited the mobility of snakes, making it easier for humans to see and capture them. In late fall, dogs started to identify areas where snakes were gathering to hibernate. These "hot spots" will be surveyed when snakes emerge in the spring. It is hoped that conservation canines could also be put to work to track down potential new target species such as Wood Turtle, Blanding's Turtle and Canada Lynx.

species and reviewed 41 aquatic species reports from COSEWIC. The Department also completed general status assessments for four new groups of aquatic invertebrates: corals, reef-forming sponges, decapod crustaceans (e.g. crab, lobster) and echinoderms (e.g. sea star, urchins). This information will be included in the 2010 *Wild Species: The General Status of Species in Canada.*

The Parks Canada Agency conducts detailed assessments of species at risk, which clarify the conservation status of many species occurring on Agency lands. These in-depth evaluations of the conservation status of species at risk determine the risk of extirpation from a specific Parks Canada heritage site. In 2009, the Parks Canada Agency assessed the conservation status of 136 unique species in national parks across Canada, accounting for 68 percent of listed species. Parks Canada Agency scientists have been regularly involved in the peer review of COSEWIC status reports, especially for species with significant populations in national parks and national historic sites such as Northern Abalone, Swift Fox and Bicknell's Thrush. This information contributes to the update of the Wild Species reports and to COSEWIC status reports.

2.1.1 COSEWIC Subcommittee on Aboriginal Traditional Knowledge

SARA requires that COSEWIC assess the conservation status of species on the basis of the best available information, including scientific knowledge, community knowledge and Aboriginal Traditional Knowledge. The Act also requires that COSEWIC establish a supporting subcommittee on Aboriginal Traditional Knowledge (ATK).

Activities of the Aboriginal Traditional Knowledge Subcommittee (ATK SC) for the year included:

- Three ATK SC meetings were held between October 2008 and March 2009, one of which included discussions with the National Aboriginal Council on Species at Risk (NACOSAR).
- An ATK SC presentation, called "Using Aboriginal Traditional Knowledge in Aiding Species at Risk," was given at the NACOSAR National Species at Risk Workshop held in February 2009. The theme of the workshop was "Aboriginal Peoples' Perspective on the Implementation of SARA."
- Workshops were held regarding the development of the ATK Process and Protocol Guidelines, which are intended to provide guidance to COSEWIC for gathering and including ATK in the COSEWIC wildlife species assessment process. Workshops were held in October 2008 with the Elders and ATK holders from Eastern Canada and in July 2009 with Elders and ATK holders from Northern Canada. Elders and ATK holders were asked to provide input into the content of these guidelines at these regional workshops. In November 2009, a draft version of the guidelines was submitted to COSEWIC, which approved the guidelines at that time.
- The Subcommittee collaborated with COSEWIC to revise the *Operations and Procedures Manual* to define the processes and procedures for the ATK component of COSEWIC's species assessment process. The ATK SC also worked with the Aboriginal community to generate a list of priority wildlife species and with the COSEWIC Secretariat to develop an ATK library.

2.1.2 Species Assessments in 2009

COSEWIC conducted the following wildlife species assessments, grouped in batches, between 2002 and 2009:

- Batch 1: 115 wildlife species in May 2002, November 2002 and May 2003;
- Batch 2: 59 wildlife species in November 2003 and May 2004;
- Batch 3: 73 wildlife species in November 2004 and May 2005;
- Batch 4: 68 wildlife species in April 2006;
- Batch 5: 64 wildlife species in November 2006 and April 2007;
- Batch 6: 46 wildlife species in November 2007 and April 2008; and
- Batch 7: 48 wildlife species in November 2008 and April 2009.

Details on batches 1 through 6 can be found in Table 3 (see section 2.2.4) and in previous SARA annual reports at www.sararegistry.gc.ca/approach/act/sara_annual_e.cfm.

Batch 7

At the November 2008 and April 2009 meetings, COSEWIC assessed a total of 48 wildlife species, including 21 aquatic species (Batch 7):

- One wildlife species was examined and found to be data deficient.
- One was assessed as not at risk.
- Forty-six were assessed as at risk, of which 17 were confirmed at the classification already attributed to them on Schedule 1.[3]

COSEWIC forwarded the assessments for 29 of the wildlife species classified as extirpated, endangered, threatened, or of special concern to the Minister of Environment in August 2009 for consideration as to whether to recommend to the Governor in Council that they be added to Schedule 1 of the *Species at Risk Act*.

2.2 Listing

2.2.1 Listing Process

Upon receiving COSEWIC's assessments, the Minister of the Environment has 90 days to post a report on the Species at Risk Public Registry that indicates how she or he intends to respond to each assessment and provides timelines for action, to the extent possible. Public consultations on species eligible for listing are then launched.

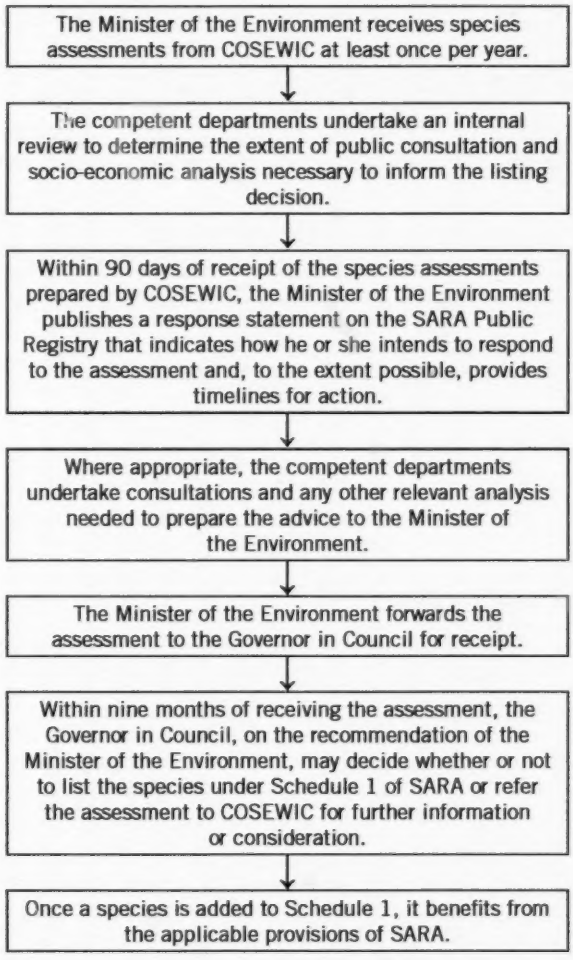
Following the posting of the response statements the Minister prepares a recommendation to the Governor in Council regarding each of the species proposed for listing, de-listing, for a change in risk status or for referral back to COSEWIC for further information or consideration. When making a recommendation to the Governor in Council, the Minister of the Environment cannot vary the status of a species as assessed by COSEWIC. As required by the *Cabinet Directive on Streamlining Regulation*, the Minister will conduct public consultations and socio-economic analyses and consider the results prior to making a recommendation. Under section 27 of SARA, the Governor in Council has the authority, on the recommendation of the Minister of the Environment and consistent with the status assessment by COSEWIC, to add or not add a species to Schedule 1 of SARA, to remove a species from Schedule 1 of SARA, or to change the status designation of a species already listed on Schedule 1. The Governor in Council also has the authority to refer the assessment back to COSEWIC.

[3] Schedule 1 of SARA contains the List of Wildlife Species at Risk.

Species that were designated as being at risk by COSEWIC prior to October 1999 were listed under schedules 2 and 3. These species are being reassessed using revised criteria, following which the Governor in Council may, on the recommendation of the Minister, add the species to Schedule 1. All Schedule 2 species have been reassessed by COSEWIC, and at the end of 2009, there were 15 Schedule 3 species remaining to be assessed.

The chart shown in Figure 1 further describes the species listing process. Table 3 (see section 2.2.4) summarizes the stage of the listing process for each batch of assessed species.

Figure 1: The Species Listing Process under SARA


The Minister of the Environment receives species assessments from COSEWIC at least once per year.
The competent departments undertake an internal review to determine the extent of public consultation and socio-economic analysis necessary to inform the listing decision.
Within 90 days of receipt of the species assessments prepared by COSEWIC, the Minister of the Environment publishes a response statement on the SARA Public Registry that indicates how he or she intends to respond to the assessment and, to the extent possible, provides timelines for action.
Where appropriate, the competent departments undertake consultations and any other relevant analysis needed to prepare the advice to the Minister of the Environment.
The Minister of the Environment forwards the assessment to the Governor in Council for receipt.
Within nine months of receiving the assessment, the Governor in Council, on the recommendation of the Minister of the Environment, may decide whether or not to list the species under Schedule 1 of SARA or refer the assessment to COSEWIC for further information or consideration.
Once a species is added to Schedule 1, it benefits from the applicable provisions of SARA.

2.2.2 Federal Government Response to COSEWIC Assessments

In August 2009, the Minister received from COSEWIC the assessments for 29 species at risk from Batch 7, including 14 aquatic species, that are eligible for addition or amendment of their status on Schedule 1. In November 2009, the Minister posted response statements for these 29 species. The response statements indicated the following:

- For 20 species, normal consultations (i.e. consistent with the consultation path that is typical for most species; see Figure 1) would be undertaken. These included 14 terrestrial species and six aquatic species. Four of these 20 species were already listed on Schedule 1—three as threatened and one as being of special concern. Of the three threatened species, one is now eligible to have its risk status lowered ("downlisted") to special concern, and the other two are eligible to have their risk status raised ("uplisted") to endangered. The special concern species is eligible to be uplisted to threatened.
- For nine species, extended public consultations would be undertaken because listing these species could potentially have marked impacts on the activities of Aboriginal peoples, commercial and recreational fishers, or Canadians at large. Of these nine eligible species undergoing extended consultations, eight are aquatic and one is terrestrial.

The Minister also posted 17 response statements for species already listed and for which COSEWIC had confirmed the risk classification already attributed to them on Schedule 1. For these 17 species, no further regulatory measures are required.

Table 1: List of species for which a response statement was posted during the 2009 reporting year

English legal name	Scientific name
Normal consultation	
Band-tailed Pigeon	*Patagioenas fasciata*
Bent Spike-rush (Great Lakes Plains population)	*Eleocharis geniculata*
Bent Spike-rush (Southern Mountain population)	*Eleocharis geniculata*
Bigmouth Buffalo (Saskatchewan – Nelson River populations)	*Ictiobus cyprinellus*
California Buttercup	*Ranunculus californicus*
Cobblestone Tiger Beetle	*Cicindela marginipennis*
Edwards' Beach Moth	*Anarta edwardsii*
Gray's Desert-parsley	*Lomatium grayi*
Horned Grebe (Magdalen Islands population)	*Podiceps auritus*
Killer Whale (Offshore population)	*Orcinus orca*
Lake Chubsucker	*Erimyzon sucetta*
Northern Abalone	*Haliotis kamtschatkana*
Oregon Lupine	*Lupinus oreganus*
Pygmy Snaketail	*Ophiogomphus howei*
Slender Popcornflower	*Plagiobothrys tenellus*
Snapping Turtle	*Chelydra serpentina*
Whip-poor-will	*Caprimulgus vociferus*
White-top Aster	*Sericocarpus rigidus*
Yelloweye Rockfish (Pacific Ocean inside waters population)	*Sebastes ruberrimus*
Yelloweye Rockfish (Pacific Ocean outside waters population)	*Sebastes ruberrimus*
Extended consultation	
American Plaice (Maritime population)	*Hippoglossoides platessoides*
American Plaice (Newfoundland and Labrador population)	*Hippoglossoides platessoides*
Bowhead Whale (Eastern Canada-West Greenland population)	*Balaena mysticetus*
Brook Floater	*Alasmidonta varicosa*
Horned Grebe (Western population)	*Podiceps auritus*

Table 1. (Continued)

English legal name	Scientific name
Killer Whale (Northwest Atlantic / Eastern Arctic populations)	*Orcinus orca*
Rainbow Smelt (Lake Utopia large-bodied population)	*Osmerus mordax*
Roundnose Grenadier	*Coryphaenoides rupestris*
Spring Cisco	*Coregonus* sp.
Status confirmed. No consultations	
Black-footed Ferret	*Mustela nigripes*
Bowhead Whale (Bering-Chukchi-Beaufort population)	*Balaena mysticetus*
Deltoid Balsamroot	*Balsamorhiza deltoidea*
Drooping Trillium	*Trillium flexipes*
Killer Whale (Northern Resident Population)	*Orcinus orca*
Killer Whale (Southern Resident Population)	*Orcinus orca*
Killer Whale (West Coast Transient population)	*Orcinus orca*
Least Bittern	*Ixobrychus exilis*
Maritime Ringlet	*Coenonympha nipisiquit*
Mexican Mosquito-fern	*Azolla mexicana*
Northern Leopard Frog (Rocky Mountain population)	*Lithobates pipiens*
Northern Leopard Frog (Western Boreal/Prairie populations)	*Lithobates pipiens*
Prairie Lupine	*Lupinus lepidus*
Rainbow Smelt (Lake Utopia small-bodied population)	*Osmerus mordax*
Roseate Tern	*Sterna dougallii*
Vancouver Lamprey	*Lampetra macrostoma*
Water-plantain Buttercup	*Ranunculus alismifolius*

2.2.3 Public Consultations

In November 2009, the Minister of the Environment launched consultations on whether to add or modify the status of 15 terrestrial species to Schedule 1 of SARA. Fourteen of these species were eligible for addition to Schedule 1, and one was eligible to have its status on Schedule 1 lowered. To facilitate consultations, the document *Consultation on Amending the List of Species under the* Species at Risk Act, *Terrestrial species: December 2009* was made publicly available on the Species at Risk Public Registry at www.sararegistry.gc.ca/document/default_e.cfm?documentID=1920. The government also contacted approximately 2400 targeted stakeholders, including provincial and territorial governments, wildlife management boards, Aboriginal communities, and other stakeholders and affected parties. Meetings were held with interested or potentially affected individuals and organizations, including numerous community-led meetings with Aboriginal people regarding the Polar Bear.

In 2009, Fisheries and Oceans Canada undertook listing consultations on more than 29 aquatic species (including 14 from Batch 7). Public consultations were facilitated through workbooks (summary documents on SARA and species information, including a survey to complete) and other supporting documents posted on the Species at Risk Public Registry and the Fisheries and Oceans Canada website. Consultation documents and workbooks were also mailed directly to other government departments, stakeholders, Aboriginal peoples and non-governmental organizations. As well, meetings were held with interested or potentially affected individuals and organizations.

In 2009, the Parks Canada Agency continued to work with Environment Canada and Fisheries and Oceans Canada in ensuring that all stakeholders were consulted and that the duplication of consultation efforts was avoided.

2.2.4 Listing Decisions

When making a listing decision, the Government of Canada relies on the scientific assessments provided by COSEWIC, any other relevant scientific information, an assessment of the costs and benefits to Canadians, and comments received through consultations with other levels of government, Aboriginal peoples, wildlife management boards, stakeholders and the public. Governor in Council decisions are published as orders amending Schedule 1 of SARA in the *Canada Gazette*, and include regulatory impact analysis statements and explanatory notes if a species is not added to Schedule 1 of SARA or is referred back to COSEWIC. The orders are also published on the Species at Risk Public Registry.

In 2009, 22 species, including eight aquatic species, were added to Schedule 1 of SARA; three species had their status on Schedule 1 uplisted to a higher risk status; and another three species were downlisted to a lower risk status. The Governor in Council decided to delist one species that COSEWIC had assessed as not at risk. The Governor in Council made no decisions not to list in 2009. One species assessment was referred back to COSEWIC for further consideration.

Table 2: SARA listing decision made by the Governor in Council in 2009

English legal name	Scientific name
Remove from List of Wildlife Species at Risk ("delist")	
Scouler's Corydalis	*Corydalis scouleri*
Move to a lower level of risk ("downlist")	
American Marten (Newfoundland population)	*Martes americana atrata*
Blunt-lobed Woodsia	*Woodsia obtuse*
Sea Otter	*Enhydra lutris*
Move to a higher level of risk ("uplist")	
Allegheny Mountain Dusky Salamander (Carolinian population)	*Desmognathus ochrophaeus*
Gray Ratsnake (Carolinian population)	*Pantherophis spiloides*
Ivory Gull	*Pagophila eburnea*
Add to List of Wildlife Species at Risk ("List")	
Black-footed Albatross	*Phoebastria nigripes*
Bluntnose Sixgill Shark	*Hexanchus griseus*
Chimney Swift	*Chaetura pelagica*
Eastern Flowering Dogwood	*Cornus florida*
Five-lined Skink (Carolinian population)	*Plestiodon fasciatus*
Five-lined Skink (Great Lakes / St. Lawrence population)	*Plestiodon fasciatus*
Greater Short-horned Lizard	*Phrynosoma hernandesi*
Lake Erie Watersnake	*Nerodia sipedon insularum*
Longspine Thornyhead	*Sebastolobus altivelis*
Northern Brook Lamprey (Great Lakes – Upper St. Lawrence populations)	*Ichthyomyzon fossor*
Nugget Moss	*Microbryum vlassovii*
Ogden's Pondweed	*Potamogeton ogdenii*
Red-headed Woodpecker	*Melanerpes erythrocephalus*
Rougheye Rockfish type I	*Sebastes* sp. type I
Rougheye Rockfish type II	*Sebastes* sp. type II
Rusty Blackbird	*Euphagus carolinus*
Shortnose Sturgeon	*Acipenser brevirostrum*
Speckled Dace	*Rhinichthys osculus*
Tope	*Galeorhinus galeus*
Verna's Flower Moth	*Schinia verna*
Western Harvest Mouse *dychei* subspecies	*Reithrodontomys megalotis dychei*
Western Harvest Mouse *megalotis* subspecies	*Reithrodontomys megalotis megalotis*
Refer back to COSEWIC for further consideration	
Northern Fur Seal	*Callorhinus ursinus*

Table 3: Summary Status of the Listing Process for Species in Batches 1 to 7 at Year-end 2009

COSEWIC assessments					Minister Receipt	Consultation process		Governor in Council			Listing decision				
Batch	Date assessed	No. of species assessed	No. assessed as 'Species at Risk'					Receipt	Proposed listing decision (CGI)*	Final listing decision (CGII)*	Listed	Uplisted†	Downlisted†	Not listed	Referred back
Schedule 1 proclamation	–	–	233		–	–		–			233				
Batch 1	May 2002, Nov 2002, May 2003	115	95	91 new assessments	Jan 2004	79 normal		Apr 2004	Oct 2004	Jan 2005	73			5‡	1
										July 2005					1
						12 extended		July 2005	Dec 2005	Apr 2006	2			4	6
				4 confirmations††	–	–		–			–				
Batch 2	Nov 2003, May 2004	59	51 new assessments		July 2004	44 normal		Oct 2004	May 2005	July 2005	39			4	1
						7 extended		Nov 2005	June 2006	Aug 2006	4§			8§	
Batch 3	Nov 2004, May 2005	73	59	55 new assessments	Aug 2005	39 normal		Nov 2005	June 2006	Aug 2006	38				1
						16 extended	6 received by Governor in Council	Apr 2007	July 2007	Dec 2007	4			2	
							1 received by Governor in Council	June 2008	Jan 2009	Mar 2009	1				
							3 received by Governor in Council	June 2009	Dec 2009	[2010]					
							6 remained under extended consultation	[2010]	[2010]	[2010]					
				4 confirmations††	–	–		–			–				
Batch 4	Apr 2006	68	54	50 new assessments	Aug 2006	35 normal **		Apr 2007	July 2007	Dec 2007	32	1			1
						15 extended	5 received by Governor in Council	June 2008	Jan 2009	Mar 2009	3	1			1
							1 received by Governor in Council	June 2009	Dec 2009	[2010]					
							9 remained under extended consultation	[2010]	[2010]	[2010]					
				4 confirmations††	–	–		–			–				
		other listing processes	1 emergency assessment		Apr 2006	–		–		May 2007				1	
			5 assessment re-submissions***		Dec 2006	1 normal		June 2008	Jan 2009	Mar 2009	1				
						4 normal		[2010]	[2010]	[2010]					
Batch 5	Nov 2006, Apr 2007	64	53	45 new assessments	Aug 2007	23 normal		June 2008	Jan 2009	Mar 2009	17	2	4		
						22 extended	6 received by Governor in Council	June 2009	Dec 2009	[2010]					
							16 remained under extended consultation	[2010]	[2010]	[2010]					
				8 confirmations††	–	–		–			–				
Batch 6	Nov 2007, Apr 2008	46	39	25 new assessments	Aug 2008	20 normal	19 normal	June 2009	Dec 2009	[2010]					
							1 received by Governor in Council	June 2009	[2010]	[2010]					
						5 extended		[2010]	[2010]	[2011]					
				14 confirmations††	–	–		–			–				
Batch 7	Nov 2008, Apr 2009	48	46	29 new assessments	Aug 2009	20 normal		[2010]	[2010]	[2011]					
						9 extended		[2011]	[2011]	[2011]					
				17 confirmations	–	–		–			–				

* *Canada Gazette* Part I/II.

† Change of the status of a species listed on Schedule 1 to a higher or lower category of risk.

‡ Includes the Polar Bear (referred back to COSEWIC in July 2005 after a decision not to list was made in January 2005).

†† Species on Schedule 1 for which COSEWIC has received/reassessed the status and for which no regulatory change is indicated.

§ COSEWIC assessed White Sturgeon as a single species but, for the recommendation to Governor in Council, Fisheries and Oceans Canada subdivided this population into six populations: Of the six populations, four were listed and two were not.

** One species for which the Response statement indicated a normal consultation path (Harbour Porpoise, Northwest Atlantic population) was not received by Governor in Council in 2009.

*** The Governor in Council had referred species back to COSEWIC for reassessment. In late 2006, COSEWIC found that no reassessment was required for five of these species and so resubmitted the original assessments to the Minister.

In June 2009, 30 species assessments, including those for nine aquatic species, were received by the Governor in Council, thus beginning the nine-month decision-making process. These assessments included

- 20 species from Batch 6 that underwent normal consultations;
- six species from Batch 5 that underwent extended consultations;
- one species from Batch 4 that underwent extended consultations; and
- three species from Batch 3 that underwent extended consultations.

2.2.5 SARA Schedule 1 Current Status

When SARA was proclaimed in June 2003, the official List of Wildlife Species at Risk (Schedule 1 of SARA) included 233 species. In 2005, 112 species were added to the original list. In 2006 and 2007, 44 and 36 more species were added, respectively. No species were added to or removed from Schedule 1 in 2008. In 2009, 22 species were added. Tables 4 and 5 show the number of species added to Schedule 1 each year, by risk status and government agency, respectively.

As of December 31, 2009, Schedule 1 listed 21 extirpated species, 202 endangered species, 117 threatened species, and 107 species of special concern.

Table 4: Numbers of species added to Schedule 1 each year by risk status, as of December 2009

Year	Risk status				Total
	Extirpated	Endangered	Threatened	Special concern	
June 2003 (Proclamation)	17	107	67	42	**233**
2005	4	47	30	31	**112**
2006	0	18	14	12	**44**
2007	0	20	5	11	**36**
2008	0	0	0	0	**0**
2009	**0**	**8**	**3**	**11**	**22**
TOTAL*	**21**	**200**	**119**	**107**	**447**

* Although the overall total number of listed species (i.e. 447) is correct, the total number of species listed as endangered and threatened may be slightly off because the values presented in this table do not reflect status changes (i.e. uplisting or downlisting of a species).

Table 5: Number of species listed on Schedule 1 by agency responsible for recovery, as of December 2009

	Environment Canada	Fisheries and Oceans Canada	Parks Canada Agency	Total
Terrestrial mammals	24	–	4	**28**
Aquatic mammals	–	21	–	**21**
Birds	56	–	3	**59**
Reptiles	31	1	5	**37**
Amphibians	19	–	1	**20**
Fishes	–	57	–	**57**
Molluscs	4	14	2	**20**
Arthropods	22	–	4	**26**
Plants	116	–	43	**159**
Lichens	5	–	1	**6**
Mosses	10	–	4	**14**
TOTAL	**287**	**93**	**67**	**447**

3 PROTECTION MEASURES FOR LISTED SPECIES

3.1 Legislative Background

The protection that comes into effect following the addition of a species to Schedule 1 of SARA varies depending on the type of species, the status of the species that is listed, and the species's location in Canada.

Sections 32 and 33 of SARA make it an offence to

- kill, harm, harass, capture or take an individual of a species that is listed as extirpated, endangered or threatened;
- possess, collect, buy, sell or trade an individual of a species that is listed as extirpated, endangered or threatened, or any of its parts or derivatives; or
- damage or destroy the residence of one or more individuals of a species that is listed as endangered or threatened, or of a species listed as extirpated if a recovery strategy has recommended its reintroduction into the wild in Canada.

These prohibitions apply automatically to listed aquatic species and to birds covered by the *Migratory Birds Convention Act, 1994* wherever they are found in Canada, and to all other species listed under SARA as endangered, threatened or extirpated, when they occur on federal lands.[4]

For species other than those in the situations described above, provinces and territories are given the first opportunity to protect listed species. If the province or territory does not act, the Governor in Council, on the recommendation of the Minister of the Environment, may order that the prohibitions in sections 32 and 33 apply for a given species on non-federal lands in a province or territory, or on lands not controlled by Environment Canada or the Parks Canada Agency in a territory. The Minister must make this recommendation if, after consultation with the provincial or territorial minister, and wildlife management board, if required, he or she finds that the species or its residence is not effectively protected by the laws of the province or territory.

[4] Under SARA, "federal land" includes, but is not limited to, Canada's oceans and waterways, national parks, military training areas, national wildlife areas, some migratory bird sanctuaries and First Nations reserve lands.

3.2 Regulations and Emergency Orders

SARA allows for emergency listings of species on Schedule 1 when the Minister deems that there exists an imminent threat to the survival of a wildlife species. In such a case, the addition of the species would be conducted via ministerial recommendation to the Governor in Council. No emergency listing was recommended by the Minister of the Environment in 2009.

3.3 Permits

Sections 73 to 78 of SARA address agreements, permits, licences, orders and other documents authorizing activities that otherwise would be offences under the Act. If all reasonable alternatives have been considered; if all feasible measures have been taken to minimize the impact of the activity; and if the survival or recovery of the species is not jeopardized, agreements may be made and permits may be issued for the following activities:

- research related to conserving a listed species conducted by qualified scientists;
- activities that benefit a listed species or enhance its chances of survival in the wild; and
- activities that incidentally affect a listed species.

In 2009, Environment Canada continued to manage a web-based SARA permit tracking system to allow for more efficient processing and issuing of permits under sections 73 and 74 of the Act. The Department is finalizing the development of an updated version that will allow for online completion and submission of permit applications. The Department plans to implement the SARA component of the e-Permitting project in the summer of 2010.

Environment Canada issued 26 permits in 2009 to allow the monitoring, inventory and management of a variety of species of birds, mammals, reptiles, amphibians and plants, representing over 100 species. Approximately 60 percent of the permits issued were for scientific research relating to the conservation of the species. Rationales for all permits issued by Environment Canada under the Act are posted on the Species at Risk Public Registry at www.sararegistry.gc.ca.

The Parks Canada Agency maintains an online research permitting system to enhance services to researchers, and to ensure that the results of research projects on species at risk being conducted in national parks or historical sites are efficiently communicated to the public. The system incorporates a mandatory peer-review mechanism that ensures that every permitted research activity is compliant with SARA. The Parks Canada Agency posted 13 SARA-compliant permits in 2009 to academic and government researchers and Parks Canada scientists for conservation research affecting species at risk.

In 2009, Fisheries and Oceans Canada issued 1257 permits covering at least 14 listed aquatic species. These permits were issued under section 73(2)(*c*) of SARA to different groups, including fish technicians, consultants, researchers, environmental scientists and National Geographic film crews, whose activities could incidentally harm listed species. Peer-reviewed assessments determined that the level of harm from these activities would not jeopardize the survival or recovery of the listed species. The Department also issued 78 permits, covering at least 45 listed aquatic species, for scientific research aimed at species conservation, and 17 permits for activities expected to benefit the species.

Fisheries and Oceans Canada issued approximately 13 000 licences, containing conditions in accordance with the recovery strategies of the Spotted Wolffish, Northern Wolffish and Leatherback Sea Turtle. The Department issued one exception under section 83 of SARA for the possession of Fin Whale baleen.

3.4 Conservation Agreements

A competent minister may, after consultation with every other competent minister, and with the Canadian Endangered Species Conservation Council or any of its members if he or she considers it appropriate to do so, enter into a conservation agreement with any government in Canada, organization or person to benefit a species at risk or enhance its survival in the wild.

The agreement must provide for the taking of conservation measures and any other measures consistent with the purposes of SARA, and may include measures with respect to

- monitoring the status of the species;
- developing and implementing educational and public awareness programs;
- developing and implementing recovery strategies, action plans and management plans;
- protecting the species's habitat, including its critical habitat; or
- undertaking research projects in support of recovery efforts for the species.

Conservation agreements can also be entered into to provide for the conservation of a wildlife species that is not a species at risk.

No agreements were negotiated during the reporting periods.

3.5 Compliance Promotion

The *Species at Risk Act* recognizes that Canada's natural heritage is an integral part of our national identity and history. All Canadians have a role to play in the conservation of wildlife species and their habitats, and public involvement through education and awareness is essential to maintaining an effective compliance and enforcement program.

Officials from Environment Canada, Fisheries and Oceans Canada and Parks Canada Agency continue to work together to promote compliance with the Act, ensuring that Canadians are informed about SARA and their responsibilities under the Act. Offences committed under SARA can lead to legal proceedings.

Environment Canada is tasked with ensuring compliance with SARA for migratory birds throughout Canada and terrestrial species that are found on federal lands within Canada (other than federal lands under the authority of the Parks Canada Agency). Environment Canada's wildlife officers monitor compliance by checking permits, conducting patrols and inspections, and issuing warnings. They also assist in the delivery of outreach events designed to educate the public and partners about activities that impact wildlife and their habitat, and share information within the Department and with federal and provincial partners. In 2009, the focus of Environment Canada's compliance promotion program was on enhancing coordination and increasing capacity. Work was undertaken to develop a framework for the compliance promotion

program for wildlife legislation at Environment Canada. The overall goal of the framework is to build a foundation for the compliance promotion program and to strengthen the coordination of efforts across the country for SARA as well as for the other wildlife legislation administered by Environment Canada.

To support the delivery of compliance promotion, a process to staff compliance promotion positions across Canada began in 2009.

In accordance with the *Cabinet Directive on Streamlining Regulations*, Environment Canada continued to plan for and carry out compliance promotion for regulatory initiatives, including orders to amend Schedule 1 of SARA. Specifically, in 2009, Environment Canada promoted compliance with SARA through information sessions for other government departments and Aboriginal communities, signage and volunteer guardian programs.

In 2009, fishery officers from Fisheries and Oceans Canada continued working with their partners to promote SARA compliance through education and outreach activities with affected communities and Aboriginal groups. Fishery officers dedicated more than 1364 hours educating Canadians through school visits, trade shows, workshops and community meetings on the threats to aquatic species at risk and how they can help protect them. The following are highlights of Fisheries and Oceans Canada's compliance promotion activities conducted by fishery officers in 2009:

- educating boat operators, including kayakers and fishing lodge staff, about the guidelines for viewing marine mammals from a safe and responsible distance;
- assisting in planning a proposed harvest for the Sea Otter, a species at risk, for food, social and ceremonial uses by Aboriginals, without compromising its recovery;
- developing a SARA educational toolkit, with presentations tailored to specific school curricula from grades 5 to 12 across Ontario and the Prairies, to introduce children and young people to the concept of species at risk and provide information on what they can do to make a positive impact;
- providing training to at-sea observers working on fishing vessels on how to identify and properly handle and release species listed under SARA (e.g. wolffish);
- conducting regular patrols in the inner Bay of Fundy salmon rivers, posting "Set Salmon Free" signs along these rivers, and educating bass and shad anglers on the issues concerning the inner Bay of Fundy Atlantic Salmon population; and
- working with commercial whelk and Snow Crab fishers to test technology to prevent the entanglement of Leatherback Sea Turtles and marine mammals in fishing gear.

The Parks Canada Agency promotes compliance with SARA by initiating and maintaining public engagement in efforts to mitigate the factors that impact the protection and recovery of species at risk, and by increasing its knowledge of key audiences to help build effective public education programs and initiatives. In 2009, the Parks Canada Agency introduced the Parks Canada Service Prevention Guidelines. These new guidelines support, and therefore recognize the importance of, activities promoting awareness and understanding of species at risk and their habitat.

3.6 Enforcement

Responsibility for the enforcement of SARA is shared by Environment Canada, Parks Canada Agency and Fisheries and Oceans Canada. These federal entities work in partnership with Aboriginal, provincial, territorial and international authorities to ensure that wild species and critical habitat listed under SARA are preserved and protected. More details regarding the applicability of SARA prohibitions can be found on the Species at Risk Public Registry at the following website: http://sararegistry.gc.ca/involved/you/default_e.cfm.

3.6.1 Enforcement Capacity

Environment Canada has the mandate to enforce, across Canada, the wildlife legislation that protects Canadian species. Four acts are grouped under this mandate:

- the *Species at Risk Act*;
- the *Migratory Birds Convention Act, 1994*;
- the *Canada Wildlife Act*; and
- the *Wild Animal and Plant Protection and Regulation of International and Interprovincial Trade Act.*

This suite of legislation is aimed at protecting and conserving wildlife species and their habitats nationally and internationally. To ensure the effective enforcement of these acts, wildlife officers work in close cooperation with various national and international partners.

Environment Canada's jurisdiction under SARA is limited to federal lands except for migratory birds. SARA-listed species located on non-federal lands, except migratory birds and fish, fall under the jurisdiction of the province or territory.

The 30 new wildlife officers hired in 2008 underwent training and integration in 2009. As of the end of 2009, Environment Canada's entire on-field action team consisted of 84 officers.

In 2008, the Government of Canada announced improvements to law enforcement capacity in Canada's national parks. Parks Canada's new law enforcement program was implemented on May 7, 2009, with 53 park wardens allocated to 24 national parks and historic sites across Canada. These park wardens are fully dedicated specialists in law enforcement. They are responsible for enforcing all legislation related to Parks Canada's mandate, including the *Canada National Parks Act* and the *Species at Risk Act*. Program implementation and planning continued through the fall of 2009, with the addition of five park wardens, thereby increasing the number of parks and sites with warden capacity to 26.

Fisheries and Oceans Canada's enforcement actions under SARA are carried out by more than 635 front-line fishery officers who have been trained and designated as enforcement officers under SARA. Fishery officers are supported by regional and national coordination of SARA enforcement activities. They incorporate SARA enforcement activities into their regular duties under the *Fisheries Act* and other legislation.

3.6.2 Enforcement Activities

Enforcement activities under SARA include patrolling protected areas, investigating alleged violations, taking measures to compel compliance, and assuring compliance through court action when necessary. Penalties for contraventions of the Act include liability for costs, fines, imprisonment, alternative measures agreements, and forfeiture of proceeds from illegal activities.

Each year, Environment Canada prioritizes its enforcement activities. In 2009, SARA enforcement activities focused on three national priorities:

- Legal obligation: a legal obligation to investigate exists under section 93 of SARA. It comes into play when receiving a public request that an inspection or investigation be carried out concerning an alleged offence involving SARA-listed species or their critical habitat or residence. This priority also includes inspections related to SARA emergency orders. Such orders are usually issued as emergency actions to protect a species not receiving adequate provincial or territorial protection. Inspections related to emergency orders are essential to addressing immediate conservation concerns.
- Commercial activities: these involve commercial/industrial activities that may entail the bycatch of SARA-listed species.
- Critical habitat on federal lands: critical habitat is the habitat deemed necessary for the survival and recovery of species listed under SARA.

In 2009, fishery officers of Fisheries and Oceans Canada dedicated a total of 15 537 hours to operational planning, patrols, inspections, investigations, court cases and other duties related to enforcing the prohibitions of SARA.

3.6.2.1 Enforcement Tracking and Intelligence

Fisheries and Oceans Canada tracks enforcement activities through the Fisheries Enforcement Activity Tracking System. Fishery officers recorded a total of 100 occurrences (reported or observed incidents) related to aquatic species at risk resulting in inspections and investigations of suspected violations. A total of 60 SARA violations were recorded, and 26 charges related to species at risk were laid.

Environment Canada's Wildlife Intelligence Program has a regional intelligence officer for each region and a national intelligence unit. Regional intelligence officers are mainly involved in the collection of operational and tactical intelligence that supports both the investigation and inspection programs. The headquarters unit focuses on strategic intelligence and analysis to determine national and international trends in illegal activities related to wildlife species.

Parks Canada Agency tracks enforcement activities through the Occurrence Tracking System. In 2009,

park wardens recorded a total of five law enforcement occurrences related to the protection of species at risk and enforcement of the Act in national parks and historic sites. There were no charges or prosecutions under the prohibitions of SARA.

3.6.2.2 Inspections

Environment Canada's inspection efforts target areas where a positive conservation result is foreseeable. Regulated communities subject to inspection for the protection of SARA-listed species may include possessors, breeders and artificial propagators of wildlife, businesses selling wildlife and wildlife products, the scientific community, zoos and permit holders. Human activities on federal lands can also have an impact on SARA-listed species and can result in investigations and/or charges related to habitat destruction, illegal capture, poaching, removal from the wild, or disturbances of residences and/or critical habitat. The list of general prohibitions under sections 32 to 36 can be found at www.sararegistry.gc.ca/approach/act/Part9a_e.cfm.

A total of 53 inspections were carried out in 2009; of these, ten turned out to be offences. Note that an inspection can include several activities or audits and can take place over a period of several days depending on the type of audit.

As part of their enforcement work, fishery officers conduct regular and targeted inspections to make sure Canadians are complying with SARA. In 2009, fishery officers conducted inspections at galleries and brokers involved in the trade of marine mammal parts such as walrus and narwhal tusks. They also patrolled the Atlantic Whitefish watersheds, inspecting people, vehicles and fishing gear, and carried out regular inspections of groundfish catches for any incidental catch of Northern, Atlantic or Spotted Wolffish.

3.6.2.3 Investigations

In 2009, Environment Canada successfully prosecuted two cases involving SARA-listed species, one in the Pacific and Yukon Region and one in Ontario.

Pacific and Yukon Region: In February 2009, two commercial photographers were fined a total penalty of $6,000 for charges stemming from an investigation into the damaging of a residence belonging to the Western Yellow-breasted Chat, a bird species listed as endangered under SARA. Following a complaint received in 2006, federal wildlife officers learned that a significant amount of wild rosebush had been removed from an area adjacent to the nest of the birds, and upon further investigation, they established that the photographers had removed the vegetation to take pictures of the adult birds feeding their young. The two men then photographed the birds for three consecutive days. Both were given conditional discharges, which will take effect after they serve a 12-month probation period. One of the photographers was ordered to pay $4,000 and the other was ordered to pay $2,000 to Environment Canada's Canadian Wildlife Service to help fund research into species at risk. The court also ordered the pair not to disseminate, or profit from, any of the Western Yellow-breasted Chat photographs they had taken after damaging the birds' residence.

Ontario Region: On August 5, 2009, a Toronto man pleaded guilty to two counts of unlawfully capturing Blanding's Turtles and a Spotted Turtle contrary to the *Species at Risk Act.* He was sentenced to nine months of jail time and given three years' probation. This conviction, the second under SARA, was the result of a joint investigation with the Ontario Ministry of Natural Resources that started in 2007 with the arrest of the individual and another Toronto man, who was tried in 2008 and sentenced to three years probation and ordered to pay a $10,000 fine. The Blanding's Turtles were returned to the wild but the Spotted Turtle was dead when it was seized. Both species are listed in Schedule I of SARA—the Spotted Turtle as endangered and the Great Lakes–St. Lawrence population of the Blanding's Turtle as threatened.

Investigations are an important part of fishery officers' enforcement work. They occur in cases where noncompliance has been discovered. An example of a major investigation that led to convictions is described below.

A three-year multi-country Fisheries and Oceans Canada investigation around threatened Northern Abalone concludes successfully

Fisheries and Oceans Canada (DFO) in the Pacific Region successfully concluded a three-year multi-country, multi-agency operation involving the illegal sale and possession of Northern Abalone, a threatened species under SARA.

Two companies were successfully brought to trial and fined $25,000 and $35,500, respectively, following an investigation triggered in 2007, in part, by an alert regarding suspicious activity supplied by a Canada Border Services Agency (CBSA) inspector. An amount of $34,500 was directed to DFO to promote conservation and protection of Northern Abalone through scientific research. A team of DFO fishery officers spent months unraveling the complex trail of illegally harvested and illegally trafficked Northern Abalone.

Members of DFO's Conservation and Protection Intelligence and Investigation Services Unit traveled to the United States and Mexico as part of the investigation, which also uncovered a related abalone smuggling operation at the United States–Mexico border near Tijuana. The case subsequently involved not only Canadian enforcement agencies—including the CBSA, the Canadian Food Inspection Agency, the Royal Canadian Mounted Police, the Province of British Columbia and DFO—but also led to international collaboration with the National Marine Fisheries Service (NMFS) in California and Washington States, the State of California Department of Fish and Game, the U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service in California and Washington States, U.S. Customs, and authorities in Mexico.

In addition to the above prosecutions and abalone seizures, the investigation led to the discovery of a significant quantity of Northern Abalone (around 750 pounds) in the Lower Mainland of British Columbia. The animals were seized and taken out of circulation by DFO fishery officers and forfeited under court order. Molecular genetics research scientists from DFO's Pacific Biological Station in Nanaimo provided conclusive forensic DNA evidence for the court that aided in successful prosecutions or guilty pleas on both sides of the border. With the assistance of DFO's Intelligence and Investigation unit and the DNA evidence, the NMFS in San Diego successfully obtained a conviction in this operation in September 2009.

4 RECOVERY PLANNING FOR LISTED SPECIES

4.1 Legislative Background

Species recovery includes a wide range of measures to restore populations of species at risk. Under SARA, the competent ministers must prepare recovery strategies and action plans for species listed as extirpated, endangered or threatened, and management plans for species listed as being of special concern. Recovery strategies identify threats to the species and its habitat, identify critical habitat to the extent possible, and set population and distribution objectives for the species, while action plans outline the actions to be taken to meet the objectives set in the recovery strategy. Management plans include measures for species conservation.

Table 6 shows the required timelines for developing recovery strategies and management plans. The timelines for developing action plans are set within the recovery strategy. Recovery documents are developed by the federal, provincial and territorial jurisdictions responsible for each species, in cooperation and consultation with other directly affected parties as required under the Act.

Table 6: Timeline for developing recovery documents (in years)

Species listing date	Recovery strategy		Management plan
	Endangered	Threatened or extirpated	Special concern
June 5, 2003	3	4	5
New listings after June 5, 2003	1	2	3
Reassessed Schedule 2 or 3 listings, after June 5, 2003	3	4	5

Proposed recovery strategies, action plans and management plans are posted on the Species at Risk Public Registry for a 60-day public comment period. The competent ministers consider comments and make changes where appropriate. The final documents are posted on the Species at Risk Public Registry within 30 days of the close of the public comment period. Five years after a recovery strategy, action plan or management plan comes into effect, the competent ministers must report on progress made towards the stated objectives.

4.2 Recovery Planning

Environment Canada, the Parks Canada Agency and Fisheries and Oceans Canada worked collaboratively to update templates and guidelines for developing recovery strategies to reflect a shift towards producing more concise strategic documents. Updates are underway to the templates and guidelines for developing management plans and action plans.

For all three competent departments, 2009 brought about significant changes to recovery planning, which will allow for more streamlined development and posting of recovery documents.

At Environment Canada, an executive management committee began a review process for recovery planning documents to ensure policy issues were adequately and consistently addressed, with recovery documents for over 75 species at risk reviewed. Overall, significant progress has been made on background recovery work for over 120 species. A multi-year plan is in place for eliminating the backlog of recovery documents that was created in the early years when SARA came into force.

Recovery Strategies

A recovery strategy is a planning document that identifies what needs to be done to reverse the decline of a species. It sets goals and objectives and identifies the main areas of activity to be undertaken. Detailed planning is done at the subsequent action plan stage. A single recovery strategy may address multiple species at risk. Environment Canada, Fisheries and Oceans Canada and the Parks Canada Agency use a multi-species/ecosystem-based approach for the recovery of species at risk, where appropriate.

Table 7 lists the number of recovery strategies posted on the Species at Risk Public Registry in 2009, by department, and the species covered by them.

Table 7: Number of recovery strategies posted in 2009, and the listed species at risk covered by them, by competent department

Competent department	Proposed		Final	
	No.	Species covered	No.	Species covered
Environment Canada	1	Grizzly Bear, Prairie population	1	Timber Rattlesnake
Fisheries and Oceans Canada	5	Atlantic Salmon, inner Bay of Fundy population Lake Chubsucker Northern Bottlenose Whale, Scotian Shelf population Blue Whale, Atlantic population North Atlantic Right Whale	1	North Atlantic Right Whale
Parks Canada Agency	3	Dromedary Jumping Slug Black-footed Ferret Tiger Salamander, Great Lakes population	3	Black-footed Ferret Hog-nosed Snake Tiger Salamander, Great Lakes population

Identification of Critical Habitat

SARA defines "critical habitat" as the habitat that is necessary for the survival or recovery of a listed wildlife species. Competent ministers must identify critical habitat to the extent possible, based on the best available information, in recovery strategies and action plans. This requirement helps to protect the amount, quality and location of habitat needed to achieve the population and distribution objectives established in the recovery strategy. If available information is inadequate to fully identify critical habitat, the competent ministers must include a schedule of studies in the recovery strategy with a view to obtaining the necessary information. Critical habitat does not need to be identified for extirpated species where reintroduction is not recommended or for species of special concern.

As with the preparation of recovery documents in general, the three competent departments engaged in substantial background work in 2009 on the identification of critical habitat.

As of December 2009, Environment Canada had identified critical habitat for 14 species and had begun working on identifying critical habitat for nearly 70 species. The Department will apply the experience acquired throughout 2009 to inform the identification of critical habitat in the coming years. Environment Canada made significant progress working with government and non-governmental stakeholders to address policy development, intergovernmental responsibilities and interactions, and the science associated with identifying critical habitat.

In 2009, critical habitat was identified for two species under the leadership of Parks Canada Agency: the Greater Sage-Grouse and the Black-footed Ferret. Where insufficient information existed to identify critical habitat in a recovery strategy, the Agency implemented studies that will enable the identification of critical habitat in the associated action plan.

Fisheries and Oceans Canada finalized the identification of critical habitat for the North Atlantic Right Whale in 2009. The critical habitats of three other species—the inner Bay of Fundy Atlantic Salmon, the Northern Bottlenose Whale and the Lake Chubsucker—were identified in proposed recovery strategies. Fisheries and Oceans Canada also initiated studies addressing the critical habitat of more than 15 species that are to be included in recovery strategies and action plans to be posted in 2010 and 2011.

Action Plans

An action plan outlines the projects or activities required to meet the goals and objectives outlined in the recovery strategy. This includes information on species critical habitat, protection measures and an evaluation of the socio-economic costs and benefits. It is the second part of the two-part recovery planning process and is used to implement the projects or activities for improving the species's status.

In 2009, Environment Canada posted two proposed action plans for the same species (Piping Plover, *circumcinctus* subspecies), one for Alberta and another for Saskatchewan. Critical habitat was identified in one of the action plans. In addition, progress has been made on a number of policy issues that will inform the development of future action plans.

Parks Canada worked on various draft action plans in 2009.

Fisheries and Oceans Canada posted an action plan summary statement for the Atlantic Whitefish.

Management Plans

A management plan differs from a recovery strategy and an action plan in that it sets goals and objectives for maintaining sustainable population levels of one or more species of special concern that are particularly sensitive to environmental factors, but that are not in danger of becoming extinct. Whenever possible, these management plans will be prepared for multiple species on an ecosystem or landscape level.

Table 8 shows the number of management plans posted on the Species at Risk Public Registry in 2009, by department, and the listed species at risk covered by them.

Table 8: Number of management plans posted in 2009, and the listed species at risk covered by them, by competent department

Competent department	Proposed		Final	
	No.	Species covered	No.	Species covered
Environment Canada	–		–	
Fisheries and Oceans Canada	5	Blackstripe Topminow, Pugnose Minnow, Spotted Sucker, Warmouth*	4	Blackstripe Topminow, Pugnose Minnow, Spotted Sucker, Warmouth*
		Killer Whale, Northeast Pacific Offshore population		Killer Whale, Northeast Pacific Offshore population
		Olympia Oyster		Olympia Oyster
		Harbour Porpoise, Pacific Ocean population		Harbour Porpoise, Pacific Ocean population
		Yellow Lampmussel		
Parks Canada Agency	1	Black-tailed Prairie Dog	1	Black-tailed Prairie Dog

*These four species were covered by one management plan.

5 RECOVERY IMPLEMENTATION

5.1 Protection of Critical Habitat

SARA requires that all critical habitat identified in recovery strategies and action plans be protected against destruction. The competent ministers use a wide range of measures to achieve this goal.

All critical habitat for terrestrial and migratory bird species identified on land under the administration of Environment Canada must be described, and those descriptions are published in the *Canada Gazette*, affording them legal protection under SARA. With respect to critical habitat for terrestrial and migratory bird species that has been identified on federal lands other than those under the administration of Environment Canada, in 2009, the Department worked towards providing legal protection under SARA to the portions not currently protected from destruction under other federal legislation. For critical habitat on lands other than federal lands, Environment Canada examined the degree to which the provinces and territories effectively protect that critical habitat.

The critical habitat of species found on lands administered by the Parks Canada Agency can be legally protected by provisions in or measures under SARA, the *Canada National Parks Act*, the *Canada National Marine Conservation Areas Act*, the *Saguenay–St. Lawrence Marine Park Act* or any other applicable legislation. In 2009, the Parks Canada Agency protected critical habitat for two species (the Greater Sage-Grouse and the Black-footed Ferret) within one national park. Substantial efforts are ongoing to finalize protection measures for critical habitat of other species on lands administered by the Agency.

The critical habitat for aquatic species can be protected under SARA or through measures in other legislation such as the *Fisheries Act* or the *Oceans Act*. In 2009, the Minister published the Critical Habitat Protection Statement for the North Atlantic Right Whale and the Critical Habitat Order for the Killer Whale (Northern Resident and Southern Resident populations).

5.2 Recovery Activities

5.2.1 Competent Departments' Recovery Activities

In 2009, Fisheries and Oceans Canada implemented research and monitoring activities and studies to identify critical habitat for several species, as required by their respective recovery strategies. For example, research was conducted on morphology,

diet, population abundance, habitat use and movements for three wolffish species. Existing acoustic and sightings data were analysed and new acoustic, sightings, and diet data were collected for Blue, Killer, Bowhead and Right whales. Research was done on the distribution, abundance, diet and mortality of the Leatherback Sea Turtle and the mapping of its critical habitat. Research was also conducted on the impact of urban development on the habitat and foraging behaviour of species at risk.

Some of the recovery activities undertaken by Fisheries and Oceans Canada for the St. Lawrence Beluga Whale involved determining causes of death and estimating areas of concentration using 28 aerial surveys. Another activity consisted of acquiring information regarding at-sea observation activities to protect the Beluga Whale in the future St. Lawrence Estuary Marine Protected Area and the Saguenay–St. Lawrence Marine Park.

Fisheries and Oceans Canada supplied expert review on stock status and recovery planning efforts for straddling stocks of species at risk, including Northern Right Whales, Blue Whale, Fin Whale and Leatherback Sea Turtle (e.g. the Atlantic Specialist Review Group meeting held in the United States).

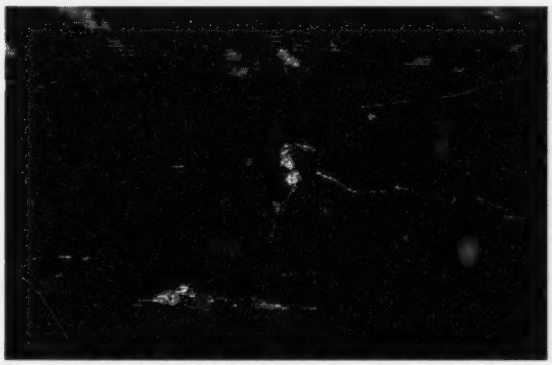
An ongoing recovery activity undertaken by Fisheries and Oceans Canada is the Marine Mammal Response Program, which aids marine mammals and sea turtles in distress.

Each year Fisheries and Oceans Canada assembles funding from external sources to help in the recovery of aquatic species at risk. For example in 2009, the Central and Arctic Region amassed more than $500,000 in external research funds for 18 projects to help protect more than 25 species at risk. Sources of funding included ArcticNet, the Ausable Bayfield Conservation Authority, Manitoba Hydro, Nunavut Implementation Fund, Ontario Ministry of Natural Resources, Ontario Power Generation, Saskatchewan Fish and Wildlife Development Fund, Species at Risk Research Fund of Ontario, University of Guelph, and University of Windsor.

The Marine Mammal Response Program: Helping marine mammals and sea turtles in distress across the country

When a whale or sea turtle is entangled in fishing gear, who're you going to call? The Marine Mammal Response Program! Fisheries and Oceans Canada manages the Marine Mammal Response Program to aid marine mammals and sea turtles in distress. This program helps species at risk as well as other species.

Fisheries and Oceans Canada works in close collaboration with researchers, non-governmental organizations, community groups and other experts to conduct this very successful program across the country.



Humpback Whale being disentangled off the coast of British Columbia
© Fisheries and Oceans Canada

Through the formal establishment and funding support of the Marine Mammal Response Program, Fisheries and Oceans Canada is able to work with outside organizations in each region to help minimize threats to marine mammals and sea turtles. Specifically, the national program provides the organizational framework for partnerships and agreements that assist in tracking and responding to marine mammals and sea turtles in distress from entanglements, strandings, ship strikes, oil contamination, and other threats. As well, the program helps to collect important information on the threats facing marine mammals and the numbers in distress each year. This information aids in the management and recovery of several species listed under the *Species at Risk Act*.

In 2008–2009, 370 responses were carried out for incidents involving a number of species at risk, including Blue Whale, Humpback Whale, Killer Whale, Beluga, Leatherback Sea Turtle, Stellar Sea Lion and Sea Otter.

This program provides an excellent example of government and non-government interests working together toward the management, conservation and recovery of Canada's marine animals.

Parks Canada reintroduces the Black-footed Ferret

Source: Public Domain
U.S. Fish & Wildlife Service

The Black-footed Ferret, once North America's rarest mammal, got a much-needed helping hand when Parks Canada carried out the reintroduction of a breeding population of ferrets at Grasslands National Park on October 2, 2009. This momentous achievement followed the approval of a recovery strategy earlier in 2009 and the identification of critical habitat within the park for the survival of this species at risk.

Parks Canada collaborates closely with the Province of Saskatchewan, land managers, conservation agencies, and research partners to ensure that the recovery succeeds. Important to this effort is work being done with the Toronto Zoo, which operates a breeding program for this species at risk and supplies Parks Canada with the young ferrets to be reintroduced into the park. The Toronto and Calgary zoos are also important urban venues from which outreach efforts can be launched to reach more Canadians. The Black-footed Ferret reintroduction strategy is part of a larger international strategy to restore a fully functioning prairie ecosystem that straddles the Canada–United Sates border. The recovery team's collaboration with the U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service is a key factor in the strategy's success and an important model for future recovery and protection efforts.

Chimney Swift towers: A great place to live

© Robbie Preston

Chimney Swifts are swallow-like birds that get their name from the habit of roosting and nesting in chimneys. The Canadian population of this little bird has declined by almost 30% over the last 14 years. This species's dwindling population and the loss of its habitat have led to its being designated as threatened.

Historically, the Chimney Swift nested in tree cavities of interior forests. When these interior forests were cleared following European settlement, the swift's preferred nesting habitat became increasingly rare. The Chimney Swift responded to this loss of habitat by adapting to a new one—brick chimneys in urban areas. The horizontal configuration of the bricks, with the associated roughness and horizontal grooves, provided the necessary surface for nest building and roosting. However, this habitat also has been greatly reduced by the now extensive use of chimney inserts (smooth, insulated metal liners) and caps.

To address the lack of suitable nesting and roosting sites, five Chimney Swift towers were installed throughout the City of Kawartha Lakes along the Trent–Severn Waterway in central Ontario. In addition to satisfying the habitat requirements of the birds, the high visibility of the towers maximized opportunities for raising public awareness of the plight of the Chimney Swift. Many local partners and donors as well as volunteers were involved in this project and contributed to its success; indeed, many of the towers were occupied by swifts for roosting, nesting or both. The towers are regularly monitored by the Kawartha field naturalist group and by a master's student at Trent University.

In 2009, Parcs Canada issued 21 permits for projects that could affect an extirpated, endangered or threatened species, their critical habitat or the residence of its individuals in national heritage areas. The Parks Canada Agency research program delivers important results for the Agency and the people of Canada and is managed to ensure that its contribution remains strategic, relevant and focused on its priorities, which include species at risk. As has been the case in previous years, research in 2009 was conducted by a broad range of highly qualified professionals from Canada and around the world. Individual researchers were mainly affiliated with universities, government institutions, non-governmental organizations and industry. Most of the partners provided their own research funds and facilities.

In 2009, the Parks Canada Agency supported implementation of recovery activities through an internal funding process for species at risk in and around national protected heritage areas. The activities included, among others, the reintroduction of the extirpated Black-footed Ferret into Grasslands National Park in Saskatchewan, the restoration of habitat in Garry Oak ecosystems in southern British Columbia, and the continuation of the species-at-risk inventory and habitat assessment along the Trent–Severn Waterway in Ontario. All these projects involve research, recovery activities, and outreach and education for an integrated approach to species recovery.

5.2.2 Other Recovery Activities

5.2.2.1 Habitat Stewardship Program

The federal Habitat Stewardship Program for Species at Risk was established in 2000 as part of the National Strategy for the Protection of Species at Risk. The goal of the Habitat Stewardship Program is to engage Canadians from all walks of life in conservation actions. Projects focus on three key areas:

- securing or protecting important habitat to protect species at risk and support their recovery;
- mitigating threats to species at risk caused by human activities; and
- supporting the implementation of priority activities in recovery strategies or action plans.

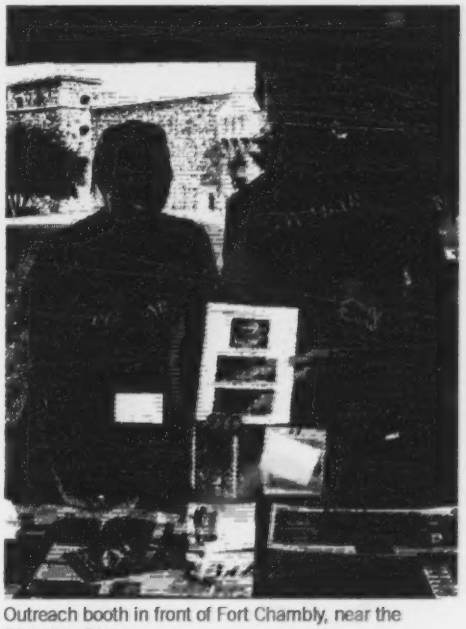
The Habitat Stewardship Program is co-managed by Environment Canada, Fisheries and Oceans Canada

Protecting the Copper Redhorse's critical habitat in Chambly, Quebec

In the summer of 2009, thanks to outreach specialists from the *Comité de concertation et de valorisation du bassin de la rivière Richelieu* (COVABAR), funded by the Habitat Stewardship Program, 1450 people are now more aware of the precarious situation of the Copper Redhorse, an at-risk species found only in Quebec.

For several years, COVABAR officers have been crisscrossing the Chambly Basin to protect the Chambly Rapids, which are the larger of the Copper Redhorse's only two known spawning grounds. The officers remind recreational boaters of the preserve's existence, the regulations in effect in that area and the precarious situation of the Copper Redhorse.

Using a species identification key, officers meet with anglers to help them distinguish between the Copper Redhorse and other fish they catch and to raise their awareness of the importance of conserving the Copper Redhorse. During the summer of 2009, these efforts reached 1450 recreational boaters. As well, COVABAR officers observed 200 violations and helped release 16 redhorses and chub, pursuant to the ban on redhorse fishing in the preserve and to the *Quebec Fishery Regulations*. This outreach activity, together with the Vianney–Legendre fish ladder at the Canal-de-Saint-Ours National Historic Site (see section 6.1), represents an important step towards the recovery of the Copper Redhorse.



Outreach booth in front of Fort Chambly, near the Richelieu River.
© COVABAR 2008

and the Parks Canada Agency, and administered by Environment Canada on a regional basis. Regional implementation boards include representatives from the two federal departments and the Agency, provincial and territorial governments, and other stakeholders, where appropriate. These boards provide advice on priorities, program direction and project selection for their respective regions. Further information on the program is available at www.cws-scf.ec.gc.ca/hsp-pih.

During the ninth year of the program (2008–2009), 213 projects initiated by 168 recipients contributed to the recovery of 366 species at risk across Canada. A total of $11.0 million in funding was awarded to these projects, and an additional $27.7 million in funding was leveraged, for a total value of $38.7 million. These contributions provided support to stewardship across Canada that resulted in the securement and protection of 332 627 hectares (ha) of land (including 15 697 ha through legally binding means, such as acquisition or conservation easements) and the restoration of 19 944 ha of land and 274 kilometres (km) of shoreline.

5.2.2.2 Interdepartmental Recovery Fund

The Interdepartmental Recovery Fund (IRF) is administered by Environment Canada as part of the National Strategy for the Protection of Species at Risk. Established in 2002, the IRF supports federal departments, agencies and Crown corporations in their efforts to meet the requirements of SARA. Projects must directly relate to the implementation of activities under recovery strategies or action plans or surveys of species at risk that occur on federal lands or waters or that are under federal jurisdiction. Only projects for species listed under SARA or designated by COSEWIC as endangered, threatened or extirpated are eligible. In surveys, endangered and threatened species are given higher priority than those from the other categories. Participating departments that manage federal lands can also receive support for project-based management activities to implement SARA. More information can be found at www.sararegistry.gc.ca/involved/funding/irf_fir/default_e.cfm.

During the IRF's first seven years (2002–2003 to 2008–2009), it has financed 491 recovery projects with a total investment of $13.7 million. In 2008–2009, the IRF supported 101 projects, totaling $2.6 million in support of the recovery of 104 species and six ecosystems (see Table 9 below for breakdown by federal agency). Of the total funds, 72 percent was applied to recovery actions and 28 percent to surveys on federal lands. Projects were implemented by nine federal departments and three Crown corporations. The projected allocation for the 2009–2010 fiscal year is $2.6 million.

Monitoring effects of natural gas activity on Swift Fox

Oil and gas development, particularly for shallow natural gas, has increased in southwestern Saskatchewan. This region is home to several species at risk, including the endangered Swift Fox. Community Pastures operated by Agriculture and Agri-Food Canada are home to numerous species at risk and account for some of the largest remaining tracts of native prairie.

There is currently little information available to assess the impacts of industrial developments on animal behaviour. In 2008–2009, funding to Agriculture and Agri-Food Canada through the Interdepartmental Recovery Fund contributed to the assessment of whether or not structures (well heads, small buildings, etc.) on the landscape have an effect on the behaviour of the Swift Fox, leading foxes to avoid these structures. Scent posts were set-up both within ten metres of structures and at random sites where no artificial structures were present. Animals visiting the scent posts were recorded on motion-sensitive cameras. While the presence of scent stations increased visitation frequency to all camera sites, the structures did not appear to affect Swift Fox visitation frequency to areas with gas structures versus random points.

Table 9: Interdepartmental Recovery Fund expenditures, by federal agency, in fiscal year 2008–2009

Lead Organization	No. of projects	IRF ($)
Fisheries and Oceans Canada	26	568,957
Indian and Northern Affairs Canada	17	364,541
Environment Canada	15	449,100
Department of National Defence	12	266,280
Parks Canada Agency	9	273,414
Agriculture and Agri-Food Canada	7	307,048
Natural Resources Canada	5	109,645
Canadian Museum of Nature	3	68,900
National Capital Commission	2	53,000
National Research Council of Canada	2	60,000
Public Works and Government Services Canada	2	29,999
Transport Canada	1	18,000
Total	**101**	**2,568,884**

Distribution of Blanding's Turtle (*Emys blandingii*) and mapping of priority conservation areas and ecological corridors in Gatineau Park and surroundings

© National Capital Commission

The Blanding's Turtle (Great Lakes and St. Lawrence population) is a threatened species, in part because of the degradation of its habitat and the fragmentation of its populations caused by roads and associated road mortality. In 2008, the National Capital Commission received funding from the Interdepartmental Recovery Fund to finalize the inventory on this species in Gatineau Park. Work also included an inventory of suitable habitats surrounding the park to identify ecological corridors between populations in the park and populations in areas adjacent to the park. The inventory of 129 sites, including 15 in the park, confirmed the species's presence at 14 sites (three in the park) and classified the sites as potential (82) or non-potential (47) habitat. In total, 21 Blanding's Turtles were observed (four in the park). Among the sites visited, 63 percent were mapped and classified as potential habitat for the species. Based on the mapping of confirmed and potential habitats, four priority conservation areas were identified for the park. To facilitate the turtles' movement between these areas, eight ecological corridors were also proposed. These proposals will be taken into account in identifying ecological corridors adjacent to the park in order to preserve ecosystem integrity and maintain the biodiversity of the park and the National Capital Region. As for the sites used by the species, most received a moderate-to-high index for road mortality, confirming the hypothesis that road mortality is one of the main threats to maintaining the population. Carrying out these priority activities, which are identified in the species's recovery strategy, will help to formulate recommendations to protect areas that are important for conserving the species and potential ecological corridors, by way of stewardship or through administrative or legal means, among other things.

5.2.2.3 Aboriginal Funds for Species at Risk

The Aboriginal Funds for Species at Risk (AFSAR) program helps Aboriginal organizations and communities across Canada build capacity to participate actively in the conservation and recovery of species protected under SARA and species at risk designated by COSEWIC. The program also helps to protect and recover critical habitat or habitat important for species at risk on, or near, First Nations reserves or on land and waters traditionally used by Aboriginal peoples. Each year, AFSAR-funded projects aim to benefit between 50 and 100 species at risk. The program is co-managed by Environment Canada, Fisheries and Oceans Canada, and the Parks Canada Agency, with the support of Indian and Northern Affairs Canada and the advice of the National Aboriginal Council on Species at Risk. Further information on the program is available at www.sararegistry.gc.ca/involved/funding/asrp_e.cfm.

In the 2008–2009 fiscal year, the AFSAR program provided almost $3.0 million for 86 projects, of which approximately $1.6 million targeted aquatic species at risk. These projects leveraged additional funds that exceeded $3.0 million (in cash and in kind). The projects involved more than 76 communities and benefited more than 221 SARA-listed or COSEWIC-assessed species through increased Aboriginal awareness of species at risk and through the development of strategies, guidelines and practices or the completion of monitoring, surveying and inventorying studies.

5.2.2.4 Natural Areas Conservation Program

The Government of Canada announced in March 2007 its investment of $225 million in the new Natural Areas Conservation Program, which helps the Nature Conservancy of Canada and other organizations secure ecologically sensitive lands across to ensure the protection of more than 200 000 hectares (half a million acres) containing diverse ecosystems, wildlife and habitat. Canada's contribution will be matched at least dollar for dollar by these organizations.

Nipissing First Nation initiative on Lake Sturgeon in Lake Nipissing, Ontario

The Nipissing First Nation initiated an AFSAR project to use Aboriginal Traditional Knowledge (ATK) to identify critical spawning habitat of Lake Sturgeon in Lake Nipissing.

The ATK information provided by Elders and other knowledge holders within the community was most valuable, as it revealed three sites used for spawning by native Lake Sturgeon stocks. Through a partnership between a local stewardship council, the Ontario Government, the Environmental Management Section of the Lands and Resources Department, and fishers from the community, the Nipissing First Nation started this project. The first goal of the project was to determine whether adults using these spawning sites represented separate populations or a single population. The second goal was to determine the demographic composition and abundance of the Lake Sturgeon population.

While the commercial fishery for Lake Sturgeon has been closed for several years, other types of fisheries continue to take place, and these activities can result in the incidental bycatch of live Lake Sturgeon. These live Lake Sturgeon are brought to a processing station where they are measured and a transponder tag is injected under their skin before they are released back into the lake. By comparing the number of recaptured tagged fish to the total number of fish caught, the size of the total population within the lake can be estimated.

The study provided a more accurate description of the size, distribution and structure of Lake Sturgeon populations in Lake Nipissing. This information allowed the First Nations community to act as an informed participant in the SARA process and to implement a co-management plan to sustain Lake Sturgeon within their claim territory.

Since 2007, 500 properties covering more than 1276 km^2 have been acquired, protecting habitat for 79 species at risk and other elements of biodiversity.

5.2.2.5 Outreach and Education

SARA recognizes that all Canadians have a role to play in conserving wildlife, including preventing wildlife species from being extirpated or becoming extinct. The Act also recognizes that the conservation efforts of individual Canadians and communities should be encouraged and that stewardship activities contributing to the conservation of wildlife species and their habitat should be supported to prevent species from becoming at risk. The Act therefore encourages stewardship and cooperation through provisions for funding programs, conservation agreements and joint programs for species at risk.

The National Strategy for Public Engagement in the Conservation of Species at Risk, approved in 2005, has continued to guide educational and outreach activities at Environment Canada. In 2009, Environment Canada continued to provide social marketing training to those involved in the recovery of species at risk, including Environment Canada regional staff, non-governmental organizations, and other government departments, in support of their educational and outreach activities. Environment Canada also continued to educate Canadians about species at risk through its long-standing partnership with the Canadian Wildlife Federation in administering the Hinterland Who's Who program as well as through the development and publishing of species profiles on the Species at Risk Public Registry. The network of national parks and sites developed educational products and initiatives for species at risk at the local and regional levels, including the production of a toolkit composed of a message bank, thematic fact sheets on SARA, and a presentation to support Parks Canada staff involved in outreach, education and consultation projects.

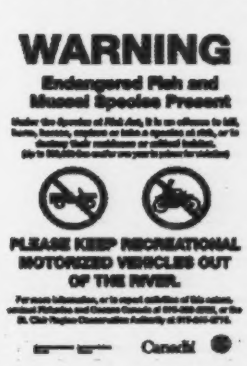
In 2009, the Parks Canada Agency, in collaboration with Fisheries and Oceans Canada and Environment Canada, partnered with the Nunavut Inuit Wildlife Secretariat to deliver a culturally relevant course on SARA to members of Nunavut organizations. Nunavut residents were members of the committee that developed the course, which brought an Inuit perspective to the collaborative work. The objective of the course is to empower participants to actively engage in the processes and programs associated with SARA by getting involved in the assessment, listing and recovery processes, and by developing species-at-risk funding proposals for projects in Nunavut.

The course has reached over 28 leaders of Nunavut communities including the entire Nunavut Wildlife Management Board. These leaders now have a new tool for passing on their knowledge and understanding of the Act to others in their communities. This course, which fosters respect for Inuit perspectives on issues related to species at risk, is a positive step towards engaging Nunavummiut in the implementation of SARA.

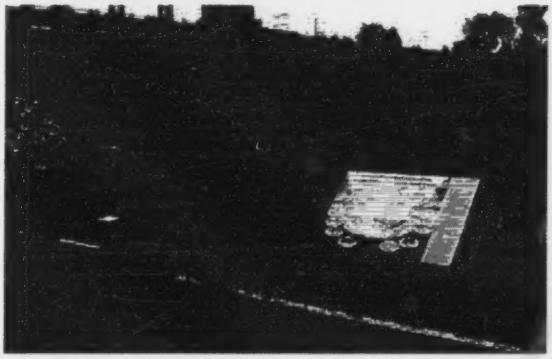
Promoting awareness of species at risk in the Sydenham and Thames rivers in Ontario

Fisheries and Oceans Canada raised some signs and a great deal of awareness on species at risk in the area of the Sydenham and Thames rivers in Ontario in 2009.

Freshwater mussels and fish species at risk are found in these two rivers that flow through southwestern Ontario. Information from Fisheries and Oceans Canada staff indicated that the habitat where at-risk freshwater mussels and fish are known to exist in the Sydenham River was being negatively impacted by recreational motorized vehicles crossing the river. In an effort to protect the species and raise public awareness, Fisheries and Oceans Canada developed warning signs. These signs alert the public to the presence of species at risk in the area and inform them that harming these species or their habitat is a finable offence. A total of 18 warning signs were installed along the river banks.



Warning sign posted at the Sydenham River, Ontario

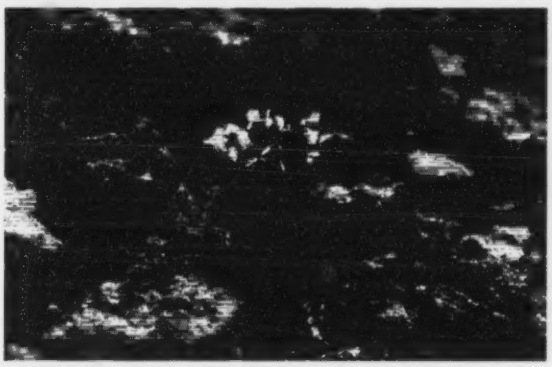

Interpretive sign installed along the Sydenham and Thames rivers in Ontario
© Fisheries and Oceans Canada

In addition, six outdoor signs were created and installed at various locations along the Sydenham and Thames rivers, including boat launches and public access areas. These interpretive signs provide details about the fish and mussels that are at risk, including the threats to their survival and actions that the public can take to help protect them.

Fernald's Braya stewardship program at Port Au Choix National Historic Site

The tiny Fernald's Braya (a mustard species known by the scientific name *Braya fernaldii*) grows nowhere in the world but on the coastal limestone barrens of northwestern Newfoundland. Part of the limestone barrens in Newfoundland is within Port au Choix National Historic Site, which harbours about 25 percent of the world's population of Fernald's Braya.

This little plant is not only found in low numbers with limited populations but is also vulnerable to any activity that alters its habitat, such as gravel extraction, dumping of various materials or vehicle traffic. These factors have led to its being designated as threatened under the *Species at Risk Act*.


© Michael Burzynski, Parks Canada Agency

The biggest threat to the barrens was found to be a lack of public awareness and concern for this unique ecosystem. Parks Canada interpretation staff trained a local stewardship coordinator and worked to engage the communities who use the barrens. Many different tools were developed: posters about the wildflowers of the barrens, school programs and a youth ambassador program, a website and a field guide to the barrens, and even sponsored art workshops and tours.

In addition, Parks Canada installed interpretive signs at Port au Choix that introduce the limestone barrens, explaining why they are special and encouraging people to enjoy them responsibly. A local resident was hired to interpret the site's natural history, help researchers and students, and keep a close watch on the rare plants.

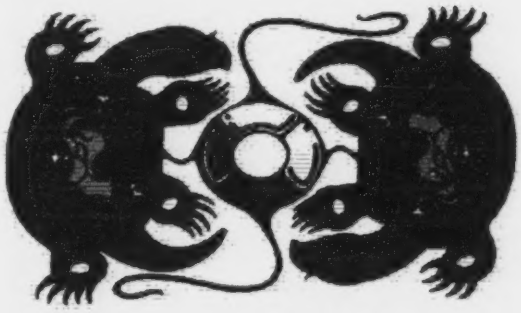
Particular attention was paid to the needs of fishers who must cross the barrens to retrieve gear along the shoreline or check on ice conditions. By finding mutually acceptable solutions, allies were gained in conservation efforts.

Today, success is apparent. More and more people are opting for activities that are compatible with conservation of the barrens. A recent attitude survey shows that public awareness is growing. The good news for Fernald's Braya is that the local people are getting to know and love the barrens. And they're helping to protect these rare plants in the process.

The Species at Risk calendar: An authentic Aboriginal work of art

This unique calendar, a Parks Canada initiative in its second edition, is an eloquent example of public education and engagement with Aboriginal peoples. Parks Canada staff worked with Aboriginal groups in the Atlantic Region to develop and distribute the calendar, which provides information about species at risk that are significant in the Atlantic Aboriginal cultures.

The 12 species at risk are depicted in colourful works of art created by regional Aboriginal artists. Each month provides detailed information on a particular species. In addition, each calendar page presents concrete examples of the involvement of Aboriginal communities in species at risk recovery work. Through the calendar, community members are invited to submit new ideas and share their own traditional knowledge to contribute to the protection and recovery of species at risk and their habitats.



Twin Turtles – April (Artist: Gerald Gloade)

The calendar highlights important historical dates and events (e.g. treaties and powwows) and showcases the culture and history of Aboriginal peoples in Atlantic Canada. The Inuit seasonal calendar is used as a backdrop, representing the climate and its effects on Inuit culture and customs. It begins in March with the seal pup season and ends in February with the igloo season.

The key to the success of this project is the close cooperation among all the stakeholders, federal partners and Atlantic Aboriginal communities. This calendar came about through the joint efforts of the Interdepartmental Aboriginal Committee on Species at Risk in Atlantic Canada, which comprises representatives of Parks Canada, Environment Canada, Fisheries and Oceans Canada, and Indian and Northern Affairs Canada.

Parks Canada and the Canadian Museum of Nature launched the Canada's Waterscapes travelling exhibit. This 150-square-metre modular, interactive exhibit highlights five ecosystems—estuaries, inland rivers, lakes, oceans and wetlands—and features species at risk found in these aquatic ecosystems. It will travel across Canada for at least three years to provincial and regional museums, science centres and Parks Canada Agency venues.

Fisheries and Oceans Canada invests efforts into key outreach and educational activities to better inform Canadians on species at risk, as illustrated in the example in this section.

6 MONITORING AND EVALUATION

Monitoring and evaluation refers to the process of examining what has been done to date to ensure that the conservation measures are on the right track and achieving the stated recovery goals and objectives.

The objective of monitoring and evaluation is three-fold:

- to detect changes in the conservation status of a species;
- to determine the effectiveness of protection and recovery measures; and
- to measure progress towards achieving recovery goals.

A set of key principles guides the monitoring and evaluation process, as follows:

- The process should be based on reliable data. The results of actions aimed at protection and recovery will be tracked and evaluated. The activities required to accomplish this will be incorporated into recovery plans.
- The process should reflect adaptive management principles. Recovery goals, objectives and measures will be reviewed in light of monitoring and evaluation results coupled with consideration of significant external factors (e.g. climatic changes). Protection and recovery measures will

be adjusted or adapted to reflect new or changed circumstances in the environment and ecosystem within which species live.
- The process should lead to reassessment. When the situation of a species changes significantly enough to warrant reconsideration of its conservation status, this information will be communicated to the body responsible for species assessment.

6.1 Recovery Measures Monitoring

In 2009, Parks Canada Agency continued to monitor its recovery activities as part of its overall monitoring program to assess how well it is achieving its recovery objectives. One of these objectives involved the reintroduction of the Pink Sand Verbena in the coastal dune ecosystems of Pacific Rim National Park of Canada. After succeeding in the propagation of the plants, staff planted the seedlings along the shore and on the dunes. The species is currently being monitored to assess its survival and seed production.

Many other monitoring initiatives involving species at risk are ongoing within the heritage areas network of Parks Canada as part of the regular monitoring program, whether it is to assess the long-term condition of the species or to evaluate the results of recovery actions and other management initiatives.

The Olympia Oyster management plan was posted on the Species at Risk Public Registry in 2009. The monitoring studies to support the management plan included field verification of historic records and quantitative surveys. In the summer of 2009, considered to be the management plan's starting year, Fisheries and Oceans Canada field crews began their monitoring activities on 98 beaches in southern British Columbia looking for the presence (live and/or shells) of Olympia Oysters. Olympia Oyster was found to be widespread and abundant in only two areas: the west coast of Vancouver Island and the Strait of Georgia. However, in most areas, abundance was relatively low and oysters tended to occupy cryptic habitats. These results provided a starting point and ongoing monitoring in future years will help evaluate the efficiency of the Olympia Oyster management plan.

Heading up the river: A unique fish ladder is helping species at risk reclaim their habitat

The Copper Redhorse is a species at risk found in the Richelieu River. A dam built in 1967 hindered the migration of the fish to its most important spawning area upstream from the Canal-de-Saint-Ours National Historic Site of Canada. Now a fish ladder of unique design is brightening the future not only for the endangered Copper Redhorse, but also for many other fish species found in the river.

Biologists, engineers and experts from as far away as France worked together on the design of a fish ladder that would consider the needs of multiple species and particularly species at risk. This endeavour was quite a challenge, since most fish ladders are designed for a single species. Monitoring the effectiveness of the ladder was critical because the fishway had to suit different water conditions, various fish species and offer entrances at or below the water surface. Over an eight-year period, the effectiveness of the fish ladder was studied using different testing methods.

The results of the monitoring have been impressive. Of the 60 species historically known to use the Richelieu River, researchers have found 36 using the fishway so far. This includes four of the five at-risk species initially targeted, bringing hope for their populations' recovery.

The Vianney–Legendre fishway, as it is known today, shows that a historic site can be more than a site of heritage significance; it can protect biodiversity, provide incredible educational opportunities, and help in the recovery of species at risk.

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A SARA success story

The Piping Plover (*Charadrius melodus circumcinctus*) has known many successes in 2009. Proposed action plans have been posted for Alberta and Saskatchewan and draft action plans have been developed for both Ontario and Manitoba.

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Productivity data from 2009 for the Alberta plover population indicate that the production target of 1.25 chicks per pair per year was exceeded. Additionally, surveys in Alberta have led to the discovery of Piping Plovers on five new lakes.

Population objectives set in the Recovery Strategy for the Canadian Great Lakes population in Ontario have been met. In 2007, a pair of Piping Plovers successfully nested at Sauble Beach, located on the shores of Lake Huron, after a 30-year absence of nesting pairs. In 2009, three pairs nested at Sauble Beach and plovers also nested at two other beaches. The Lake of the Woods population also had a successful breeding season, with one pair nesting, the first since 2003.

Funding under the Habitat Stewardship Program contributed to 23 Piping Plover projects across the country in 2009. The Piping Plover Guardian Project in Nova Scotia, for one, engaged over 100 volunteers to erect signs and fences at nesting sites, monitor nesting and fledgling areas, and educate beach users about the risks faced by the Piping Plover.

The long-term recovery goal for the Piping Plover is to achieve a viable, self-sustained and broadly distributed population.

6.2 Parliamentary Five-year Review of SARA

Section 129 of the *Species at Risk Act* requires Parliament to review the Act five years after that section comes into force (the section came into force on June 5, 2003). The Parliamentary five-year review of SARA was referred to the House of Commons Standing Committee on Environment and Sustainability on February 24, 2009. The Committee began its substantive work on March 10, 2009, and held four days of hearings in spring 2009. Environment Canada, Fisheries and Oceans Canada, and Parks Canada Agency officials appeared before the Committee and provided a Progress Report on the *Species at Risk Act* as well as case studies. The other witnesses appearing at the hearings were representatives of COSEWIC, SARAC (SARA Advisory Committee), and industry (Canadian Cattlemen's Association, Canadian Association of Petroleum Producers, Canadian Electricity Association, and Canadian Hydropower Association). More information on the Parliamentary five-year review can be found at www.sararegistry.gc.ca/approach/act/parl_review_e.cfm.

6.3 SARA General Status Report

SARA requires that a general report on the status of wildlife species be prepared five years after section 128 comes into force (2003) and every five years thereafter. The purpose of the report is to provide Canadians with an overview on which wild species are doing fine, which to keep an eye on, and which need to be formally assessed by COSEWIC. This document, *The Status of Wild Species in Canada (SARA General Status Report 2003–2008: Overview Document)*, fulfils the Minister of the Environment's obligation under SARA to provide a general report on Canada's wildlife.

The 2008 SARA General Status Report, which was released in 2009, is based largely on the *Wild Species 2005* report (see section 2.1), prepared by a federal–provincial–territorial group of experts. It also provides an update on general status rankings since the release of the *Wild Species 2005* report, primarily resulting from new assessments by COSEWIC. The report is available on the Species at Risk Public Registry at www.sararegistry.gc.ca/document/dspHTML_e.cfm?ocid=7382.

7 CONSULTATION AND GOVERNANCE

7.1 Ministers' Round Table

The *Species at Risk Act* requires that the Minister of the Environment convene a round table of interested persons, at least every two years, to advise the Minister on the protection of wildlife species at risk in Canada.

The second Minister's Round Table was held in Ottawa on December 16, 2008. Participants included representatives from territorial governments, environmental non-governmental organizations, industry groups and Aboriginal groups. A report from the Round Table, outlining the Minister's response to the recommendations received, was posted on the Species at Risk Public Registry on July 7, 2009. The Minister's response committed to further work towards providing clarification and guidance relating to a number of areas, including critical habitat and authorizations. The report can be found on the Species at Risk Public Registry at www.sararegistry.gc.ca/approach/act/roundtable_e.cfm.

7.2 Consultation with Aboriginal Groups and Other Stakeholders

7.2.1 National Aboriginal Council on Species at Risk

SARA recognizes that the role of Aboriginal peoples in the conservation of wildlife is essential and that Aboriginal peoples possess unique traditional knowledge concerning wildlife species. The National Aboriginal Council on Species at Risk (NACOSAR), composed of representatives of Aboriginal peoples of Canada, is created under section 8.1 of SARA to advise the Minister of the Environment on the administration of the Act and to provide advice and recommendations to the Canadian Endangered Species Conservation Council.

In 2009, NACOSAR and its Policy and Planning Committee held several face-to-face meetings and teleconferences to discuss various topics, including:

- planning for the Parliamentary five-year review of SARA;
- developing advice to improve the Aboriginal SAR funding programs;
- incorporating Aboriginal Traditional Knowledge in the implementation of SARA;
- ways and means to bring Aboriginal groups together to develop Aboriginal Traditional Knowledge guidelines;
- common concerns with the COSEWIC Subcommittee on Aboriginal Traditional Knowledge and development of a communications protocol;
- Aboriginal engagement policy on SARA;
- better engaging youth and elders in NACOSAR; and
- recovery strategy and consultation on caribou.

7.2.2 Species at Risk Advisory Committee

The Species at Risk Advisory Committee (SARAC) was created by the Minister of the Environment through discretionary powers under the Act. Chaired by Environment Canada, the Committee was established to provide advice on the administration of the Act. The Committee includes ten representatives from industry groups, ten representatives from environmental non-governmental organizations and two members from

National Round Table on Polar Bears

The National Round Table on Polar Bears was held on January 16, 2009, in Winnipeg, Manitoba. Participants of the Round Table included territories and provinces, the wildlife management boards, the Inuit, First Nations, Aboriginal groups, scientists and others who have a management or conservation role to protect Canada's approximately 15 500 Polar Bears. The purpose of the Polar Bear Round Table was to increase awareness of the many conservation actions underway by various parties, to hear views regarding priority areas for action from a broad cross-section of knowledgeable opinion leaders and to set the scene for consultations related to listing the Polar Bear under the federal *Species at Risk Act*. During the round table, it was recognized that it is essential to develop a cooperative and integrated knowledge base for the conservation of Polar Bears. If adopted, the National Conservation Strategy for Polar Bears will formalize the commitment by all jurisdictions to Polar Bear conservation and management, and the Strategy would form the basis of a management plan for the species if it is listed under SARA.

academia. Representatives from Fisheries and Oceans Canada and the Parks Canada Agency also attend the committee meetings as observers.

SARAC held a series of teleconferences and two face-to-face meetings in 2009. Discussions and advice regarding SARA implementation included:

- review and guidance in the development of the SARA policy suite;
- development of processes related to SARA listing and recovery;
- review of bilateral agreements;
- recovery planning best practices;
- SARA requirements for environmental assessment;
- stewardship models;
- review of the national strategy for public engagement; and
- planning for the Parliamentary five-year review of SARA.[5]

7.3 Cooperation with Other Jurisdictions

The federal, provincial and territorial governments agreed to the National Framework for Species at Risk Conservation in June 2007. The National Framework supports the implementation of the Accord for the Protection of Species at Risk by providing a set of common principles, objectives and overarching approaches for species-at-risk conservation to guide federal, provincial and territorial species-at-risk programs and policies.

The specific objectives of the framework are to

- facilitate coordination and cooperation among jurisdictions involved with species at risk;
- encourage greater national coherence and consistency in jurisdictional policies and procedures; and
- provide context and common ground for federal–provincial–territorial bilateral agreements.

SARA recognizes that the responsibility for the conservation of wildlife in Canada is shared by federal, provincial and territorial governments. The federal government is responsible for terrestrial species found on federal lands as well as aquatic species and most migratory birds, while the provincial and territorial governments are primarily responsible for other species. SARA is designed to work with provincial and territorial legislation.

7.3.1 Canadian Endangered Species Conservation Council

The Canadian Endangered Species Conservation Council (CESCC) was established under the 1996 Accord for the Protection of Species at Risk and was formally recognized under SARA. The CESCC is made up of federal, provincial and territorial ministers responsible for conservation and management of species at risk.

Under SARA, the CESCC provides general direction on the activities of COSEWIC, the preparation of recovery strategies, and the preparation and implementation of action plans, and coordinates the activities of the various governments represented on the council as they relate to the protection of species at risk.

In June 2009, CESCC Deputy Ministers met in conjunction with the Deputy Ministers' Committee of the Wildlife Ministers' Council of Canada (WMCC) in Georgetown Royalty, Prince Edward Island. Deputy Ministers provided direction on various issues related to species at risk and wildlife, including the implementation of SARA and the work taking place with regards to the Boreal Woodland Caribou recovery strategy and the Polar Bear Conservation Strategy. They also provided direction on proposals made by the Canadian Wildlife Directors Committee to strengthen the strategic oversight of the CESCC and WMCC.

7.3.2 Bilateral Administrative Agreements

The establishment of governance structures for interjurisdictional cooperation is central to the effective implementation of the Act.

Reflecting this commitment, the departments are negotiating bilateral agreements on species at risk with all provinces and territories. The agreements set out shared objectives, as well as specific commitments where the governments will cooperate on species-at-risk initiatives. As of 2009, agreements have been signed with the governments of British Columbia, Quebec and Saskatchewan, and a Memorandum of Understanding has been concluded with the Nunavut Wildlife Management Board. Agreements with other provinces and territories are at various stages of negotiation.

[5] Environment Canada did not chair or otherwise participate in these discussions.

7.3.3 Canadian Wildlife Directors Committee

The Canadian Wildlife Directors Committee (CWDC) plays an important role in interjurisdictional cooperation on species at risk. The committee is an advisory body on wildlife issues including species at risk. The committee is co-chaired by Environment Canada and a province or territory on a rotating basis (Quebec in 2009). The committee is made up of federal, provincial and territorial wildlife directors, including representatives from Environment Canada, Fisheries and Oceans Canada, and the Parks Canada Agency. CWDC provides leadership in the development and coordination of policies, strategies, programs and activities that address wildlife issues of national concern and help conserve biodiversity. It also advises and supports the CESCC and WMCC Deputy Ministers' and Ministers' councils on these matters.

The CWDC met twice in 2009 and held several conference calls to address various issues, including several related to species at risk:

- providing advice to the Deputy Ministers' Council and the CESCC;
- coordinating program activities among jurisdictions, including the establishment of multi-jurisdictional recovery teams, guidance to the National Recovery Group, stewardship, bilateral agreements;
- coordinating the preparation of reports on the national status of wildlife in Canada; and
- providing guidance to COSEWIC.

7.3.4 Recovery of Nationally Endangered Wildlife Working Group

The Recovery of Nationally Endangered Wildlife (RENEW) Working Group consists of federal, provincial and territorial representatives responsible for the recovery of species at risk. RENEW provides information, advice and recommendations on recovery matters to the Canadian Wildlife Directors Committee.

7.3.5 Aquatic Species at Risk Task Group

To help further interjurisdictional discussions, the ministers responsible for fisheries and aquaculture created the Aquatic Species at Risk Task Group, which includes representatives from Fisheries and Oceans Canada and all the provinces and territories.

In 2007, the task group finalized a document entitled *National Strategy for the Protection and Recovery of Aquatic Species at Risk*, approved by the Canadian Council of Fisheries and Aquaculture Ministers. Throughout 2008, each jurisdiction worked on implementing the strategy, which will be ongoing for years to come. The Aquatic Species at Risk Task Group has been disbanded, but a report on the progress of the National Strategy for the Protection and Recovery of Aquatic Species at Risk will be tabled at the next Interjurisdictional Working Group meeting in April 2010.

7.4 Federal Coordinating Committees

The federal government has established governance structures to support federal implementation of the Act and its supporting programs. Several committees, composed of senior officials from Environment Canada, Fisheries and Oceans Canada, and the Parks Canada Agency, meet regularly to discuss policy and strategic issues, and to monitor SARA implementation. These include

- the Species at Risk Deputy Ministers Steering Committee;
- the Species at Risk Assistant Deputy Ministers Committee; and
- the Species at Risk Directors-General Operations Committee.

All of these committees met regularly in 2009 to discuss and provide direction on matters related to SARA implementation, such as

- development and implementation of policies and interdepartmental guidance concerning the implementation of SARA;
- development and implementation of processes related to SARA listing and recovery;
- development and implementation of bilateral agreements;
- implementation of an action plan developed in response to a formative evaluation of federal species at risk programs;
- approval of priorities and projects under the three species-at-risk funding programs (Habitat Stewardship Program, Aboriginal Funds for Species at Risk and Interdepartmental Recovery Fund); and

- planning for the departments' preparations for the Parliamentary five-year review of SARA.

7.5 Consultation on the *SARA Policies: Overarching Policy Framework*

The federal government developed a draft SARA policy suite to explain its intentions in meeting its obligations under the *Species at Risk Act*. The policy suite has three primary objectives:

- to clarify the intent of authorities and provisions under SARA;
- to establish guiding principles for the implementation of SARA; and
- to clarify our understanding of the roles and responsibilities of the various jurisdictions involved in the protection and recovery of species at risk.

Throughout the development of these policies, significant consultations were undertaken over a two-year period with:

- other government departments;
- the Canadian Wildlife Directors Committee (composed of federal, provincial and territorial representatives); and
- the Species at Risk Advisory Committee (composed of members of various stakeholder groups, including various industry groups, academia, and environmental non-governmental organizations).

The National Aboriginal Council on Species at Risk (NACOSAR) was also afforded the opportunity to provide comments.

Most of the comments received from these key groups related to the clarification of policy statements and requests for more technical details to guide the implementation of the policies. Key topics included the identification of critical habitats, the use of a safety net, and action planning.

To give the public an opportunity to comment on the proposed documents, the draft policy suite was posted on the Species at Risk Public Registry for a 60-day consultation period, commencing on December 7, 2009. This consultation period also provided the key groups that were involved in the previous consultations the opportunity to see how their comments were addressed.

This consultation process is aligned with the Government of Canada's commitment to working with all interested parties to ensure that species at risk and their critical habitats are protected. Furthermore, it provides the Government of Canada with the opportunity to improve transparency and public confidence in regards to the *Species at Risk Act* and its programs.

8 SPECIES AT RISK PUBLIC REGISTRY

The Species at Risk Public Registry fulfils the requirement under SARA for the Minister of the Environment to establish a public registry for the purpose of facilitating access to SARA-related documents. The Public Registry was developed as an online resource and has been accessible since the proclamation of SARA in 2003. In addition to providing access to documents and information related to the Act, the Public Registry provides a forum to submit comments on SARA-related documents being developed by the Government of Canada.

Section 123 of SARA identifies documents that must be published on the Public Registry, including:

- regulations and orders made under the Act;
- agreements entered into under section 10 of the Act;
- COSEWIC's criteria for the classification of wildlife species;
- status reports on wildlife species that COSEWIC has prepared or has received with an application;
- the List of Wildlife Species at Risk;
- codes of practice, national standards or guidelines established under the Act;
- agreements and reports filed under section 111 or subsection 113(2) of the Act, or notices that these have been filed in court and are available to the public; and
- all reports made under sections 126 and 128 of the Act.

Other documents prepared in response to the requirements of SARA include recovery strategies, action plans, management plans, and reports on round-table meetings.

Information in the Species at Risk Public Registry is maintained through the collaborative efforts of

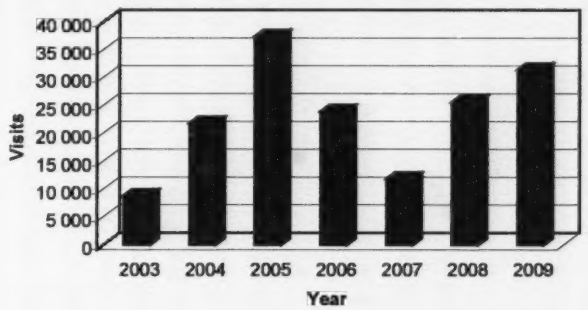
partners and stakeholders, and is an important tool in engaging and informing Canadians on species at risk issues.

In 2009, 239 documents were published on the registry. Documents included SARA and COSEWIC annual reports, consultation documents, COSEWIC status reports and species assessments, ministerial response statements, recovery strategies, management plans, species profiles, and permit explanations. Also posted were the report and summary of proceedings of the Round Table on the *Species at Risk Act*, held in December 2008. Two of the most popular areas of the site for 2009 include text of the Act and the List of Wildlife Species at Risk.

Following an upward trend since 2007, average monthly visits for 2009 were strong (see Figure 2).

Efforts in 2009 also focused on making the site compliant with Treasury Board's Common Look and Feel 2.0 standards.

Figure 2: Average Monthly Visits, by Year



9 FURTHER INFORMATION

For more information, publications, questions or comments concerning Species at Risk programs and activities, please contact the following:

Environment Canada
Inquiry Centre
351 St. Joseph Boulevard
Gatineau, Quebec
Canada K1A 0H3
Tel: 819-997-2800
Tel: 800-668-6767
Fax: 819-953-2225
E-mail: enviroinfo@ec.gc.ca

Fisheries and Oceans Canada
Communications Branch
200 Kent Street
13th Floor, Station 13228
Ottawa, Ontario
Canada K1A 0E6
Tel: 613-993-0999
Fax: 613-990-1866
E-mail: info@dfo-mpo.gc.ca

Parks Canada
National Office
25 Eddy Street
Gatineau, Quebec
Canada K1A 0M5
Tel: 888-773-8888
E-mail: information@pc.gc.ca

Public Registry Office

For more information, questions or comments on the Species at Risk Public Registry, please contact the following:

SAR Public Registry Office
351 St. Joseph Boulevard, 21st Floor
Gatineau, Quebec
Canada K1A 0H3
E-mail: SARAregistry@ec.gc.ca